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HISTORY OF THE PEACE:

BEING A

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

FROM

1816 TO 1854.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

1800 TO 1815.

By HARRIET MARTINEAU.

VOL. IV.

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HISTORY OF THE PEACE.

B O O K V.

CHAPTER VI.

IT is natural to shrink from the task now before us, of contemplating Ireland at the commencement and during the term of Lord Mulgrave's (presently Lord Normanby's) Administration. It is natural now to turn away in heart-sickness when the records under the eye bring up again the high hopes, and the no less flattering fears, of the time; when the ear catches again the echoes of the strife and tumult of those few years when bigotry was in terror or despair, when the oppressed were uttering blessings, and the advent of hope was like the awakening of the thousand voices of the spring after wintry tempests were gone, and when the loud, clear master-tone of justice made itself heard over all. It is natural to recoil from the thought of that critical period, when all, of every party, believed that a new age had set in for Ireland, and that she was henceforth to grow into the likeness of England, from century to century. Under the hourly pressing sense of what Ireland is now,—under the bitter and humbling disappointment of all hopes, and the visitation of new fears which are but too like despair,—it is natural to look into the past with shrinking and pain. But there is something in the spirit of history as cordial and cheering under passages of humiliation and disappointment, as there is admonitory and chastening in times of hope and triumph. Stern as is the spirit of history in rebuking presumption, and showing up the worthless character of transient victories, and pointing out the inevitable recurrence of human passion and folly, in high places and in low, with all the mournful consequences of such frailty,—exactly in the same proportion is she genial and consoling in an adverse season,—pointing out the good that underlies all evil, shedding hope upon the most ghastly perplexities, and cheerfully teaching us how to store

up all our past experience as material for a deeper knowledge and a wiser action than we were qualified for in our time of highest confidence. As a matter of curiosity or recreation, no one would revert to Ireland, between the years 1835 and 1840; but when, in the course of historical survey, it becomes necessary to contemplate this province of our experience, it is found that far healthier and happier feelings arise to succeed and modify those of disappointment and distress. It is true that we look back upon the wisest and most earnest men then active in that field as upon children planting and watering, and setting their gardens to rights in a new burst of sunshine, while we, from the summit of futurity, perceive how the waterspout is hurrying on which is to tear up every thing, and leave all waste: but we see also that the more complete is the waste, the more thorough will be the renovation; and that perhaps the giddy and wrangling children may come back to their work with a better knowledge and a more rational expectation.

When it appeared that Catholic emancipation had not tranquillized Ireland, the opponents of that emancipation were occupied with their triumph, and with their preparations to keep down the Catholics by all means, political and social, yet left in their power; but the advocates of the emancipation were driven to consider why it was that the measure appeared to have done so little. Presently might be seen a number of men, and of sets of men, each of whom had an idea about the true Irish woe and its remedy. There was much truth in almost every one of these ideas; and great wisdom and virtue in many of the men who acted upon them. But none of them had got to the bottom of the matter; and of the very few men in the kingdom who had insight into the real state of the case, there appears to have been no one who dared openly and emphatically to speak his thought.

Some thought that Ireland could never prosper while religious rancor prevailed as it did; and that all would be well if this rancor could be gradually discharged from the Irish mind. These advocated the extinction of tithe, the reduction of the Church, the impartial distribution of office among Catholics and Protestants, the discountenance of Orangeism, and the establishment of the government plan of national education. There was weighty truth in all this; but, when its advocates looked for the redemption of Ireland by these means, they were wrong.

Some thought that the fatal mischief was the distrust and dislike of the law among the Irish people; and these believed the true remedy to lie in winning over O'Connell from his pernicious teachings of illegality and chicanery, and in appoint-

ing a viceroy and staff of officials, whose first care should be to administer with the strictest justice the ordinary powers of the law ; who should reform the judiciary of all Ireland, and institute that practical education in simple legality in which the Irish people were conspicuously deficient. There was weighty truth in this ; but, when its advocates looked to such a policy for the redemption of Ireland, they were wrong.

Some dwelt on the undisputed difference between the Irish and the English character, and especially on the constitutional tendency to illegality which they believed they ^{Principle of government.} recognized in the Celtic race ; and urged that the true method of governing the Irish was not by the English method, but by an affectionate despotism. They pointed to O'Connell, as the virtual sovereign of Ireland, and asked what might not be hoped from sending over a popular Viceroy, whose love of the Irish should make his relation to them that of a chieftain to his retainers ; whose empire, in short, should be like that of O'Connell in kind, while the safeguards of sincerity and honor should be added to the popular qualifications of the great demagogue. There might be much truth in this, valuable if urged antecedently to the annexation of Ireland, but of no practical avail towards her immediate redemption.

Some believed gross political corruption to be the chief curse, and proposed a registration of voters as a means for the ^{Political corruption.} discouragement of political profligacy. The men of this one idea pursued it with such energy as to show that they really did expect, from the restriction and regulation and ascertainment of the franchise, the redemption of Ireland.

Others believed that political principle and knowledge were to be obtained only through political training, and that the reform of municipal institutions was even more important for Ireland than for England and Scotland. They dwelt upon the great truths involved in the recommendation of municipal ^{Municipal deterioration.} over central government ; and quoted De Tocqueville, where he says, as if he were describing the Irish people, " In certain countries of Europe the natives consider themselves as a kind of settlers : the greatest changes are effected without their concurrence, and without their knowledge ; nay, more, the citizen is unconcerned as to the condition of his village, the police of his street, the repairs of the church, or of the parsonage ; for he looks upon all these things as unconnected with himself, and as the property of a powerful stranger whom he calls the government.¹ He has only a life-interest in these possessions, and he entertains no notions of ownership or of improvement. This want of interest in his own affairs goes so far, that if his own safety or that of his

¹ Democracy in America, i. p. 126.

children is endangered, instead of trying to avert the peril, he will fold his arms and wait till the nation comes to his assistance. This same individual, who has so completely sacrificed his own freewill, had no natural propensity to obedience: he cowers, it is true, before the pettiest officer, but he braves the law with the spirit of a conquered foe, as soon as its superior force is removed; his oscillations between servitude and license are perpetual. When a nation has arrived at this state, it must either change its customs and its laws, or perish; the source of public virtue is dry; and, though it may contain subjects, the race of citizens is extinct.¹ . . . How can a populace, unaccustomed to freedom in small concerns, learn to use it temperately in great affairs? What resistance can be offered to tyranny in a country where every private individual is impotent, and where the citizens are united by no common tie? Those who dread the license of the mob, and those who fear the rule of absolute power, ought alike to desire the progressive growth of provincial liberties.² . . . Local assemblies of citizens constitute the strength of free nations. Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science: they bring it within the people's reach; they teach men how to use and enjoy it. A nation may establish a system of free government; but, without the spirit of municipal institutions, it cannot have the spirit of liberty." "Here," said the advocates of municipal reform in Ireland, — "here we have before us the straight road to the redemption of Ireland. Every one knows that her natural resources are abundant for the wants of her inhabitants, if only her inhabitants knew how to use them. This is the way to teach them, — this is the way to call out and increase such public virtue as exists. It is not by an affectionate despotism, but by a training to self-government, that the Irish must be redeemed. Their own affectionate despot himself says, that purified municipal institutions will become 'normal schools of peaceful agitation:' we shall find them normal schools of political and social intelligence and virtue, and by them Ireland may at last be redeemed." In this faith — to a considerable extent justifiable — the advocates of municipal reform worked diligently for the five years which ran their course between the introduction of the question and the passage of the mutilated Bill for Irish corporate reform. There was weighty truth in their doctrine; but, when they looked for the redemption of Ireland by this means, they were wrong.

Others saw a necessity underlying even the deepest that have been pointed out; and they thought it might be met by giving every man in Ireland a right to subsistence. The uncertainty of food, and consequent recklessness of temper and habits among the

¹ Vol. i. p. 132.

² Vol. i. p. 73.

laboring-classes ; the carelessness or rapacity of bad landlords ; the unprofitable management of the land ; the depraving prevalence of mendicity, and almost all the worst evils of life in Ireland, — might, it was said, be met, and in time corrected, by a good poor-law. This was the one great measure which would operate beneficially in all directions, — would feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and settle the roving, and restrain the encroaching, and employ the idle, — would bring the unscrupulous landowner to reflection and retribution, enable the good occupier to understand and control his own position, — and would, in short, establish natural relations throughout the disorganized society of Ireland. There was weighty truth in all this, — so much truth, and held by so many of the best minds among philosophers, statesmen, and men of business, that few dared to qualify the general expectation excited by their confidence ; but there were persons who felt and said at the time, that all who looked for the redemption of Ireland through an extension of the English poor-law were wrong.

Who, then, were right? Among these many who were wrong, was there no one right? It is surely not to be expected that any one should be wholly right. The proof of the insufficiency of any or all of the above-mentioned theories was not yet extant. The materials for a right judgment were scattered abroad, — one person here and another there obtained a glimpse of true insight ; and some declared what they thought and saw. It was a common thing to be told that “the land” was at the bottom of the Irish difficulty ; but this might mean, and did mean, several different things. It might mean any one of a dozen prevalent vices and faults in the tenure or distribution or cultivation of land, or in the social circumstances which gave land a peculiar value in Ireland. Those who came nearest to the truth, consciously or unconsciously, were perhaps the lawyers, who told a friend, here and there, in an undertone by the fireside, that there was not a title to land in Ireland that would bear looking into ; that this was a secret known to all who were concerned in it ; that it accounted for the dispute about the value of the existing registry of deeds ; the sorest impediment to improvement ; the natural cause of the singular recklessness of Irish landlords ; the sufficient explanation of the silence and apparent apathy of mortgagees and others concerned in the enriching of estates, about all methods of improvement and convenience ; and a powerful instigation to men of various classes to take the law into their own hands, and to nourish those social feuds which might strengthen and protract the local dominion of men whose title to their land was, or might be found, insecure.

The greater part of Irish landed property had been granted

Uncertainty
of subsistence.

Fundamental
difficulty.

Insecurity of
title to land.

three times over, at least, during the long sequence of troubles in that unhappy country. The descendants of old Irish chieftains still looked on those estates as properly their own which had been the homes of their fathers; and the posterity of all other dispossessed parties looked on with the same jealous eyes. As for those in actual possession, too many of them conducted themselves and their property in the way which has made the Irish landlord a by-word and reproach. The virtuous administration of their estates was not to such the great duty and object in life that it is usually seen to be in countries where the property is secure as a matter of course; where the tenantry and laborers are regarded by the proprietor as persons to whom he owes serious duties; and where the improvement of the estate for the benefit of heirs is the first consideration in connection with it. Such is the natural state of things — however set aside in special cases by the vices of bad landlords — under the main condition of security of property. The opposite state of affairs was that which naturally appeared in Ireland. The sole object, too often, was to make the most of the present time, leaving the future to take care of itself. The smallness of the proprietary body is in itself a serious and portentous evil in Ireland, where the number of holders of land in fee is said not to exceed 8000.¹ The very large estates held by these few persons sink lower in productiveness, in proportion to the lapse of time which, instead of giving security, reveals embarrassments which are evidently insurmountable. Instead of investing capital in the land for its improvement, the proprietors had split it into small freeholds, before the disfranchisement of “the forties;” and the system was not changed after that disfranchisement, because more immediate profit was supposed obtainable from the high rents promised by the numerous tenantry than by improved cultivation. A proprietor, doubtful whether he could sell his land on account of its questionable title, embarrassed by settlements and mortgages, hopeless of freeing the estate by any effort of his own, naturally does as his father did before him, and as he supposes his son will do after him: he gets what he can from year to year, and hopes the sky will not fall in his time. The insecurity extends to the tenantry, who are more numerous than the unimproved land can support. They got their land by bidding against each other; and they know that they cannot have it long, — having promised rents which they cannot pay; so they snatch what they can from the ground and from fate, and make themselves as comfortable as they can till the sky falls. Such was the state of things, and the cause of that state, known to a few before the experiment of impartial government was tried in Ireland; and, if only it had been

¹ Condition and Prospects of Ireland, p. 239.

more widely and thoroughly understood, it seems impossible that men should have expected so much as they did from reforms which did not touch the radical evil, — the insecurity of landed property in Ireland. As we shall see, the remedies referred to above were all tried; and there is no need to inform any reader that Ireland is not yet redeemed.

1. First: various efforts were made to abate the religious rancor of Irish society. That little could be done through the reduction of the Church and the commutation of tithe, has been shown. We have seen how hard and protracted was the labor of getting any thing done about tithe, — owing to the very rancor which it was the great object to moderate. We have seen something, too, of the annihilation of Orangeism, as an organization; but it would occupy a volume to tell all that happened between the Irish government and the Orangemen before the royal Grand-master dissolved the association. The avowed principle of Lord Mulgrave's government was impartiality; and it appears to have been firmly adhered to: but so unused was Ireland to impartiality in the government, that both Protestants and Catholics interpreted the acts of the Viceroy as favor to the Catholics. Investigation was made into the condition of Ribbonism, against which the Protestants declared themselves obliged to organize their Orangeism in self-defence; and, to the surprise of the government no less than others, it was found that scarcely any thing but the name existed. Frequently as the world had been, and still was, alarmed by intimations in the newspapers of dreadful Ribbon-plots, they were found, on the most searching inquiry, to be mere bugbears. As there was nothing to lay hold of, Government could do no more than proscribe Ribbonism with all other secret societies, while it was compelled to inflict open shame upon Orangeism. The Orangemen began their demonstrations early after the arrival of Lord Mulgrave. In consequence of the recorder of Dublin having denounced the Melbourne Administration as "infidels in religion," a public meeting was called in Dublin, to consider of this libel; and Orangemen attended in large bodies, — a fight being, as usual, the close of the business. In consequence of a Government prohibition of Orange processions in the north, a pamphlet was widely circulated which called on Orangemen to break the law, because Government did not punish such breaches of the law as the swarming of Jesuits through the land, and the rearing of the unhallowed heads of monasteries.¹ When the Viceroy had returned from his southern journey, and was about to set out for the north, the Orangemen of Londonderry threatened him, through the newspapers, with even personal violence. "If he should come

Impartiality
to sects.

Ribbonmen
and Orange-
men.

¹ "A Voice from the North."

among us, he shall see such a display of Orange banners as shall put him into the horrors.”¹ They would take care to give such notice of his approach as should secure him a reception which he had better not encounter; and so forth. While the Viceroy was thus threatened by one party, and affectionately hailed by the other, it was difficult to keep the public mind fixed on the ruling government principle of impartiality. At the same time, intimidation was officially given throughout the constabulary force that a sub-constable in Wexford had been dismissed on proof of his having attended an Orange lodge; and a drum-major was tried by court-martial, and reduced to the ranks, for having played party-tunes in the streets of Belfast. The Viceroy disallowed the election of the master of an Orange lodge to the mayoralty of Cork, and of two other Orangemen as sheriffs, in September, 1835. These instances looked like partiality, while no Ribbonmen were dismissed or otherwise punished. If Ribbonmen could have been found, in office or out of it, they would have been punished; but all endeavors to detect and punish Ribbonism were in vain. A Catholic policeman endeavored to join, in order to obtain information; and an inspector of police was sent to England to learn from an Irish soldier in a place of safety what he would not have told among his acquaintances at home: but all that could be discovered, by all the powers of government and the police, in five years, supplied ground for only one prosecution; and that broke down. Thus all the penalties devolved on one party; but it could not be said that that party met only with severity. As soon as the intention of the leaders to dissolve the Orange societies was known, the Viceroy liberated all the Orangemen who were under arrest for joining prohibited party-processions on the 12th July preceding.

The Irish Orangemen were, however, less obedient to their chiefs than the English and Scotch. The Dublin grand-committee met and decided that “the mere will of the King was not law,” and that their watch-word should be “No surrender.” Sir Harcourt Lees addressed a letter to the brethren, the last paragraph of which was adopted as the Tory text or watchword from that day forward: “Orangemen, increase and multiply,—be tranquil,—be vigilant. Put your trust in God,—still revere your King,—and keep your powder dry.” This letter was dated February 27, 1836.² On the 7th of April following, the Orange idol was rent to pieces in its shrine; the statue of William III. was blown up on its pedestal in College Green, Dublin. Here was a Catholic outrage,—an act of Ribbon sedition at last. But, almost before this was said, men began to smell some of the “dry powder” above referred to, in the train which blew up the statue.

¹ Londonderry Sentinel, September, 1835. ² Spectator, 1836, p. 364.

Government offered a large reward for the detection of the offender; and the Dublin corporation offered as much again. The perpetrator was never discovered; but some incidents of the time caused a general impression that the hand employed was that of a wrathful Orangeman.

Meantime, the Viceroy and his co-adjutors in the government persevered in bestowing office without regard to religious persuasion. They selected the fittest men; and, if they inquired whether they were Protestant or Catholic, it was for the purpose of holding the balance as evenly as they could. The practice of setting aside Roman Catholics as jurors was broken through; and, throughout the island, the Protestants, ^{Catholics in the jury-box.} who had always regarded their neighbors of another faith as idolaters and rebels, saw with amazement and horror that they were trusted to try the accused, to administer the laws, and transact the business of society, as freely as if they hated the Pope and cursed the Jesuits.

All this was very well; but a more effectual method of ultimately extinguishing religious rancor was supposed to be by the system of national education established in Ireland.

In October, 1831, the first announcement of this scheme was made in a letter from the then Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Stanley, to the Duke of Leinster. The object was not new, — the object of diminishing the violence of religious animosities by bringing together the children of Catholic and ^{National education.} Protestant daily, — to sit on the same bench, take an interest in the same ideas, and find, by constant experience and sympathy, how much they had in common. This object had been aimed at through the organization of the Kildare-street schools; but the machinery was not of the right kind, though conscientiously worked. In 1828, a committee of the House of Commons had recommended the adoption of a system “which should afford, if possible, a combined literary and separate religious education, and should be capable of being so far adapted to the views of the religious persuasions which prevail in Ireland, as to render it, in truth, a system of national education for the poorer classes of the community.” In order to meet the religious wants and wishes of all parties, certain days in each week were set apart for the religious instruction of the children by their respective clergy; and every encouragement was given to the communication of such instruction daily, before and after school-hours. The great difficulty was about the method of giving any religious sanction to the secular teaching in the schools. All desired some such sanction; but the Protestants contended for the whole Bible, spurning the idea of selections being made from it for school-reading, as the rankest blasphemy, while the Catholics are not, as every

one knows, allowed the free use of the Scriptures. Selections from the Bible were made, to the satisfaction of many clergy, both Protestant and Catholic; and these have been in use to this day. A brief remark dropped by the Archbishop of Dublin in the debate (February 28, 1837) on the appointment of a committee of inquiry into the Irish school-system, conveyed a significant hint and warning to those who heard him, and to many out of doors, that nothing could be more perilous than to circulate among the people exaggerated notions of the differences between the several versions of the records of their salvation.¹ Yet, from the Bishop of Exeter in the Lords, down to the idlest clergyman without a flock in Ireland, the opposition to the Education Board and its acts, on the ground of the mutilation of the Scriptures, was virulent to a degree incredible in men who call themselves Christians. They could not, however, overthrow the Board, or stop its good works. They could not even hinder Protestants in Ireland from accepting the benefit of the schools, though hundreds and thousands of children were kept away, to be lost in ignorance and superstition, who would otherwise have been rational and enlightened citizens of a country whose main want is of good citizens.² The Archbishop of Dublin said, on this 28th of February, 1837, that "he had ascertained, by examination, that in these schools [in a particular district], extending to between 300 and 400, in which it was said there were no Protestants, that about 22,000 Roman-Catholic children and 16,000 Protestants had been educated." In the face of every kind of opposition, even of atrocious slanders without any foundation whatever, — slanders such as bigotry and religion and party spirit in politics could alone generate, the national school-system in Ireland continued to expand and flourish during the whole period of the Melbourne Administration, tending to humanize every district where it was planted, and preparing, as it was fondly hoped, a brightening prospect of social peace for a future generation. During the eight years from the establishment of the system to the going out of the Whig Administration in 1841, we find an annual advance in the number of schools and scholars, in an accelerating ratio; till, since 1834, the number of schools in operation had increased from 789 to 2337, and the number of scholars from 107,042 to 281,849.³ And the Board was then about to aid 382 additional schools, which would add 48,000 to the number of pupils on the rolls. When hundreds of thousands of children were thus reared in security from sectarian rancor, it seemed to many that such rancor might, and must in time, be discharged from the mind of the Irish people; but good as was the work, and bright as were the hopes

¹ Hansard, xxxvi. p. 1144.

² Hansard, xxxvi. p. 1142.

³ Progress of the Nations, sec. vii. ch. 4.

which it yielded, it is not the less clear that those were wrong who looked to this institution for the redemption of Ireland.

2. Next, we must glance at the policy desired by those who would have won over O'Connell from his practice of teaching dislike and distrust of the law; believing this dislike and distrust of the law to be the one impediment to the redemption of the Irish people. At the same time that O'Connell was won over to silence, the Irish government was to rule conspicuously by the ordinary powers of the law, to exercise the strictest impartiality, and to compel a similar recognition of equality before the law throughout the country, by a reform of the judiciary.

The characterizing virtue of Lord Mulgrave's administration in Ireland was its reliance on the ordinary powers of the law, and the impartial exercise of them. Extreme as was the consternation of the Church and Tory portion of Irish society at seeing Catholic gentlemen admitted to the magistracy, and Catholic lawyers to office in Dublin, and Catholic juries sitting to try offenders, either Protestant or Catholic, and loud as was the outcry about the return of the times of James II. and the domination of the Pope in Ireland, the improvement in social life and the decrease of crime soon became unquestionable facts.¹ It was an affecting sight to those who happened to be in Ireland in 1837, to see the awakening of the Catholic population to a sense of what law and justice were, and to a hope that they might share in the benefit. The Catholic priesthood led the way in trusting the government; and the people followed. It was a touching sight,—that of the melting down of the popular spirit of pride and cunning into gratitude and trust. Hitherto, the pride of the Irish peasant had nourished itself in defiance first, and then evasion of the law, as in defiance and circumvention of an enemy. The chief ground of the popular admiration of O'Connell was his success in defying and evading the law; and every follower of the agitator gloried in emulating him, as far as opportunity allowed. Now, for the first time, the idea dawned upon the general Irish mind, that law and justice might possibly be a benefit, and not an oppression; and when, fostered by the priests and justified by the whole course of the government, this idea grew clear and strong, the revulsion of feeling was a truly affecting sight. Criminals became odious, instead of endeared, by their crimes; they were informed against, instead of harbored; and the fiercest wrong-doers felt ashamed of outrages against the public peace, instead of glorying in them. If the cause of Irish misery had not lain deeper than was then dreamed of,—if all collateral improvements had not been swept away through the absence

¹ Protestant petition, January, 1837.

of the only effectual remedy, — the training of the Catholic Irish to legality and order in Lord Mulgrave's time might have proved their permanent redemption from one of their worst national faults. As it was, the remarkable and steady subsidence of crime, during the whole term of the Whig Administration in Ireland, is a sufficient testimony to the wisdom and humanity of the characterizing principle of its rule.

Sir R. Peel reminded Parliament, in 1829, that "for scarcely one year, during the period that has elapsed since the union, has Ireland been governed by the ordinary course of law." Insurrection Acts, suspension of the Habeas Corpus, and martial law, were all familiarly associated in men's minds with the very name of Ireland; and all had been in vain, — so vain that Parliament itself became uneasy and remorseful; and Lord Grey's government fell on the question of a Coercion Bill.¹ Now, for a term of years, the experiment was tried of putting the ordinary law in force without fear or favor; and the result was, that, at the close of the Viceroy's term of government, twenty-seven out of thirty-two counties in Ireland were perfectly tranquil, or eminently tranquillized, while the remaining five were not worse

than they had always been before; that, while the decrease of crimes proceeded from year to year, the proportion of convictions to committals, and of committals to offences, was always on the increase, — showing that at length the people were taking their part in the administration of justice, for the public good; that, wherever the influence and example of the government could act freely, crime had almost disappeared, — as in the instance of the celebrated faction-fights, which were now seldom heard of; while the crimes which did continue were those which arose from agrarian discontents, — from that great underlying grievance which every government has left untouched; and, finally, that the decrease of crime, on comparison of the three years ending in 1838 with the three years ending in 1828, was no less than 10 per cent. of murder and manslaughter, 46 per cent. of shooting and stabbing, 29 per cent. of conspiracy to murder, 56 per cent. of burglary, and 86 per cent. of house-breaking for arms in the night.

The alarmed Protestants in Parliament, however, complained that Lord Mulgrave desecrated and annulled the law by his clemency. He had made a circuit through the south first, and then through the north of Ireland, and had visited the jails, and most establishments supported by the public funds. In visiting the jails, he had inquired of three parties concerning the prisoners whose pardon might be desirable,² — of the resident officers, about their conduct in prison; of the medical officers,

¹ Irish-Crime Committee; evidence, 1836. ² Hansard, xxxvi. p. 340.

about their health; and of neighboring gentlemen, about their previous character, and the probability of their good conduct henceforth. Where necessary, application was made to the judges for guidance. Of 800 petitions for pardon, about half had been entertained; of these, only 100 had been favorably answered, on certificates from medical men and others. These — whatever had been said to the contrary — were Protestants or Catholics, as might happen; while the rest, the only class to whom the prison-doors had been thrown open freely, were Orangemen convicted of joining illegal processions. The small proportion of recommitments among the offenders thus pardoned testified to the discretion of the mercy which had released them at the commencement of a new period in the government of Ireland; yet the political Protestants, perplexed and dismayed by the new doctrine and practice of equity before the law, persisted in calling the Viceroy's journeys of inspection "jail-delivery circuits," and concluded that pardon was granted for the sake of the Catholics.

There was another doctrine, propounded by a member of the government at this time, which was offensive to the political "Protestants," as they called themselves, who opposed the acts of the Mulgrave Administration. There is no survivor of that Administration who will not eagerly assent to the avowal, that that one member, Mr. Drummond, was the mind and ^{Thomas} soul of it. Mr. Drummond, the military surveyor, ^{Drummond}. the discoverer of the light known by his name, the private secretary of Lord Althorp, by the united wish of Lord Grey's Cabinet, and the Irish under-secretary under Lords Mulgrave and Morpeth, was a man of great external calmness, of eminent prudence in the ordinary affairs of life, and, till of late years, apparently devoted altogether to scientific pursuits. His acquaintances were wont to rally him for his Scotch prudence and caution, and to describe the pleasures and pains of enthusiasm to him, as things that he could not possibly know any thing about. It was his function in Ireland which revealed him to his friends, if not to himself. His subdued enthusiasm now manifested itself in a moral force, as lofty and sustained as it was powerful. The cool man of science came out the philanthropist, the philosopher, the statesman, the virtual preacher, — carrying the loftiest spirit of devotedness into each function. He put wisdom into the counsels of the Irish government, and moderation into its demeanor. He put enthusiasm into the justice which he gave impartially to the Irish people; and he called for justice in the enthusiasms which the observant people paid back to the government. It was he who repressed crime throughout the nation, and rebuked its passions, and stilled its turbulence, and encouraged its hopes,

and stimulated its industry, and soothed its sorrows. His sobriety of judgment and calmness of manner never gave way; but a fervor, like that of renewed youth, latterly pervaded his whole mind, animated all his faculties, and deepened his habitual composure, while he was consciously meeting the martyr's doom. He lived too fast, knowingly and willingly, during these few years which he believed to be so critical for Ireland. Under his work, his responsibilities, his thronging ideas, his working emotions, his frame could not hold out long; and he was prostrated at once by an attack of illness in the spring of 1840. "I am dying for Ireland," he said, just at the last. He died for Ireland; and, in the contemplation of his death, how do other deaths which bear more of the external marks of martyrdom for Ireland, shrink, by comparison, in our estimate! Here was no passion,—no insulting speech,—no underhand or defiant action,—no collision of duties,—no forfeiture of good faith,—no implication of the helpless in danger,—no disturbance of society,—no imperiling of any life but his own. No man who courted the bullet or the gibbet ever dared more; no man who organized rebellion in consultations by day and drillings at night ever wrought harder; no man who cast his all into the revolutionary balance was ever more disinterested and devoted. He, a soldier of a sensitive spirit, brought upon himself unmeasured insult, which would elsewhere have been intolerable; but for Ireland's sake he bore it all. He went through endless toils which nobody knew of who could give him any return of honor. He felt himself sinking, before he had attained the rewards which might once have been alluring to him,—before he had attained wealth or rank, or a post in the world's eye, or the fame of statesmanship; but he toiled on, too busy on Ireland's behalf to have a regret to spare for such things as these. If there are any who cannot reconcile themselves to such an issue, let them remember how noble a way remains to do him honor. Let them name his name when Ireland wants his example. When boasts of martyrdom abound, and blustering patriots would rouse the ignorant and suffering to rash enterprises, and men who will not work for Ireland talk of fighting for her, and those who cannot deny their own vanity or indolence or worldly care, claim the glory of patriotic agitation, let the name of Thomas Drummond be quietly spoken, and human nature has lost its rectitude and its sensibility if the arrogance be not shamed, and the vaunt silenced.

He was a man whom few things could astonish. One of the few things which did astonish him was the effect of certain words of his own which appeared to him as simple and commonplace as any thing he ever uttered. It is certainly true, however, that the most commonplace sayings have an effect proportioned to the

moral force of those who utter them; and in this case the words appear — even now to us — instinct with the just and brave spirit of the man. The story was this. In the course of the debate in the Upper House on Lord Roden's motion, towards the close of 1837, it was mentioned by Lord Mulgrave (then become Marquis of Normanby), and by other speakers on the same side, that all inquiry led to the conclusion that the murders and manslaughter in Ireland were not owing to religious differences or political contents, but almost exclusively to agrarian grievances. This opinion, far from acceptable to listening Orangemen and Irish landlords, was vehemently protested against, not only by Lord Roden, but by the Duke of Wellington, who quoted the Marquis Wellesley as an indisputable authority, who had said that the agrarian disturbances themselves were ascribable to political agitation.¹ From that time, the Irish landlords and political chiefs on the Tory side seem to have taken for granted that the government was a company of declared foes, who would keep watch on the management of their private affairs, and cast upon them the responsibility of all outrages perpetrated on Irish estates. On the 1st of January, 1839, Lord Norbury was shot in his own shrubbery, in broad daylight, while pointing out to his steward some trees which he destined for removal. The cause of the deed was shrouded in mystery. Lord Norbury was on good terms with his Catholic neighbors and tenants; and he did not concern himself about politics. The question was naturally asked by everybody whether this was another agrarian outrage. The very words fired the passions of the landlords, — before jealous, and now panic-stricken.² At a meeting which they held, in the name of the magistrates of King's County at Tullamore, to consider the circumstances of this murder and of the country, they reverted to those few words of Mr. Drummond's, which their vehement wrath at once raised into a proverb. These words were found in a letter of Mr. Drummond's in reply to a request from the magistrates of Tipperary for an increase of military or police force. The Under-secretary refused the assistance requested, and gave reasons which induced the receivers of the letter to keep it secret, lest the common people should hear about it, "and be led to think ill of the landlords." The letter was asked for in Parliament, however, and necessarily produced; and it actually became a parliamentary document before the magistrates of Tipperary had been generally permitted to see it. In this much-canvassed letter occurred the words, *His maxim.* "Property has its duties as well as its rights." In their fear and grief at the murder of Lord Norbury, possibly through some discontent among his tenantry, though he was a

¹ Hansard, xxxix. pp. 262, 263.

² Spectator, 1839, p. 54.

kind landlord, the King's-County magistrates reverted to Mr. Drummond's proposition, as a subject on which to vent their passion; and it shows how wild and desperate must have been their wrath that they could fall out with a proposition so simply indisputable. It was declared, that, in that letter, the Tipperary magistrates were "bearded and insulted" by Mr. Drummond. A resolution was carried without a division, "that it appears to this meeting that the answer conveyed to the magistrates of Tipperary from Mr. Under-secretary Drummond has had the unfortunate effect of increasing the animosities entertained against the owners of the soil by the occupants, who now constitute themselves the sole arbiters of the rights as well as the duties of property." Lord Charleville ventured to declare, in moving this resolution, that the saying about property having duties as well as rights, though innocent enough in itself, was felt to be little less than a deliberate and unfeeling insult in the circumstances under which it was offered. When the plainest truths of morals are felt to be personal insults, all men see how the matter stands; and all men know that those plain truths are then made vital. And so it was in this case. The Tory landlords of Ireland have never forgotten that property has its duties as well as its rights. But the annunciation of this truth was fatal to all perception on their part of the impartiality of government rule.

One instance of the impartiality, — of the want of respect of persons, — exasperated the "ascendency" leaders extremely. It was not only poor men — sub-constables and the like — who were dismissed from the government service for Orangeism, but great men also, with equal speed and certainty. Colonel Verner, who represented the Orangemen of the empire in the Commons, during the investigation of the Fairman plot, gave at an election dinner, as a party toast, "The battle of the Diamond."¹ Mr. Drummond wrote to inquire whether it could be possible that Colonel Verner was thus a party to the commemoration of a lawless and disgraceful conflict. Colonel Verner's reply first supposed that he could not be expected to condescend to reply, and requested that any future question which the Secretary might be desired to ask, should "be expressed in terms better qualified to invite an answer;" and then refused to answer the inquiry at all. The chief-secretary, Lord Morpeth, now wrote himself, and, assigning reasons at length for the step taken by the government, signified to Colonel Verner his removal from the commission of the peace, and from the office of Deputy-lieutenant of the county of Tyrone. Colonel Verner brought the matter before Parliament, and thereby did an unintentional service to the government by publishing, in the most effectual manner, the

¹ Hansard, xxxix. n. 635.

evidence of its principles and methods of rule. Among the ignorant and passionate poor, meantime, the repressive and equalizing rule of the government was extending, without its being felt as pressure. The police force of Dublin, and the constabulary throughout the country, were renovated and organized till they became as fine a body of police as exists in any country. Where the justices could not be relied on for repressing political demonstrations, stipendiary magistrates were planted, to direct the constabulary; and the quiet which followed surprised even the authors of it. Many causes of breach of the law were removed by the Tithe Act, and by new provisions and arrangements in relation to the collection of rents and the serving of the processes of the inferior local courts. Collisions between the people and rent-collectors and process-servers were thus almost entirely obviated. But provision was at the same time made for the more certain and effectual punishment of all who still offended. Government undertook the prosecution of several classes of offences which before must be pursued by private parties, who might be accessible to fear or favor. Crown prosecutors appeared at the quarter-sessions,—one for each county,—and obtained convictions for a great number of offences which would otherwise, though well known, have gone unpunished,—to the disgrace of justice, and the demoralization of the people. Witnesses were protected by government, before and after the trials, and publicly recognized as citizens who were doing their duty to society. By a steady use of these methods, more was done to enlighten the Irish as to the true function of law, and to convince them of its being a blessing to every man of them all, than could have been supposed possible in so short a term of years. But the underlying mischief was not removed nor touched; and those who looked to the admirable administration of law and justice by Lord Normanby's government for the redemption of Ireland were wrong.

3. The idea that an affectionate despotism—a government by apostles—is the only government that will suit the Irish people, unfit as they are thought to have shown themselves for a share in a representative system, seems almost too romantic and unpractical for an express mention in our age. But it happens, curiously enough, that we have evidence before our eyes, that, suitable as a government by apostles may be to the Irish mind and temper, it could not avail for the redemption of the country. There has been no want of apostles or of idols in our own time; and little permanent good has accrued from the action of the very best. Lord Normanby and his coadjutors were truly apostles, on a mission of justice and

mercy; yet, after how short a course of years, were they compelled to avow that their "policy of conciliation was exhausted"! In the latter years of their term, too, they had the advantage of speaking in the name of the Queen, who was perfectly idolized throughout the length and breadth of the land.

The Queen.

We are assured by those who have explored the repository of Irish songs, and collected the political ballads which abound among the peasantry, that, in O'Connell's most triumphant days, his simplest admirers did not dream of his title of King interfering with that of the Queen.¹ Her Majesty, we are told, had a perfect host of volunteer poet-laureates; and the publishers of the popular literature declared that the most favorite old national ballads would not sell unless some lines in praise of Victoria were added. In the religious ballads, Her Majesty is even more prominent still. The prophecies of this beloved order of poetry, whose tone is prophetic throughout, all point to the restoration of the true Church, and of Irish prosperity in consequence. Always favorites of the Catholic peasantry, from Queen Elizabeth's days to Queen Victoria's, they circulate most diligently in times of discontent and approaching revolt; and they now, for the first time since the Revolution, expressed trust in a lawful ruler.² In Elizabeth's days, the retriever was to be the King of Spain; then the O'Neill; then the Stuarts, regnant and exiled; then Dan. O'Connell; and, at the time under our notice, Queen Victoria. She is to build up the old Munster Cathedral, and the Catholic Church generally; and to remedy every evil, great and small, that afflicts humanity in her Irish dominions. And there is, in the eyes of the singers of these ballads, no unreasonableness in expecting such things from "our noble young Queen:" on the contrary, it would be impious to expect less,—Victoria being especially watched over by the Virgin, and aided by St. Francis; and having, as supporters, Lord Mulgrave on the one hand, and Dan. O'Connell on the other. While the Orangemen of the north were striving to outdo everybody in protestations of devotion to the Queen, and she was thus adored by the Catholic peasantry of the south, her representative and ministers had no permanent success in their efforts to "tranquillize Ireland." Nor, as it appears, would they have succeeded better if the great apostle of all had been at the antipodes. In governing by an affectionate despotism, it would always be a difficulty to make sure of having but one despot at a time. O'Connell, however, though he might at any moment interfere with the course of the Mulgrave or any other Administration, was not, in fact, at this period interfering with it. For a short time, he left off calling the government "the base, bloody, and

O'Connell.

¹ London and Westminster Review, lxiv. p. 92.

² p. 98.

brutal Whigs;" and mentioned repeal only now and then, to keep up the government to its business, as he thought. He heard with delighted ears, and repeated with an untiring tongue, the declaration of Lord John Russell, in February, 1837, of the principles which the Whigs consulted in their theory of Irish government; a declaration which he interpreted as a manifesto in favor of ruling Ireland by an affectionate despotism. "I will take leave," said Lord John Russell, in introducing the Irish Municipal-reform Bill, "to quote the principle of our conduct from the recorded words of a very great man.¹ . . Mr. Fox stated, in a very eloquent speech which he delivered in 1797, the principles upon which he conceived the government of Ireland should be conducted. He stated in his usual frank, it might be said incautious manner, that he conceived concessions should be made to the people of Ireland; he said, if he found he had not conceded enough, he would concede more; he said that he thought the only way of governing Ireland was to please the people of Ireland,—that he knew no better source of strength to this country; and he declared in one sentence, which I will read to the House, his wish with respect to the government of Ireland. 'My wish is,' said Mr. Fox, 'that the whole people of Ireland should have the same principles, the same system, the same operation of government; and, though it may be a subordinate consideration, that all classes should have an equal chance of emolument: in other words, I would have the whole Irish government regulated by Irish notions and Irish prejudices; and, I firmly believe, according to another Irish expression, the more she is under Irish government, the more will she be bound to English interests.'" This would have been all very well, if the only danger of antagonism had been between Ireland and England; but the theory was vitiated, fatally, by the antagonism of parties within Ireland herself. However, its enunciation gave sufficient satisfaction to O'Connell to secure his temporary co-operation. He praised the Whigs, dined with the Viceroy, railed at the opposition in the House of Commons with a coarseness of language and demeanor which confounded the speaker himself; called upon every peasant in every village to regard himself as a supporter of the government; but withal kept up his General Association,—the successor of the Catholic Association,—and gave it the name of the Precursor Society, as a broad hint of the repeal agitation that would follow if the government fell below his mark.

It was in 1836, when the Lords were throwing out their Municipal-reform Bill, that the organization was restored, for "the rousing of the millions of Ireland," as Mr. Sheil said, "and

¹ Hansard, xxxvi. p. 210.

a development of the might which slumbers in her arm." "The association, the old association, with its millions for its sustenance, is what we want, and what we needs must have again."¹ And they had it, at its old place of meeting, the Corn Exchange, with its old chair, presented to it by O'Connell; its tribute, under the new name of the justice-rent; its machinery of appeals and of regulation and of registration, and its old assumption of dictatorial power. It was an affectionate despotism, corroborative for a time of British government, but ready for opposition at any moment. Its change of title from the General to the Precursor Association was ominous; and it sounded somewhat like a bull when O'Connell, in 1839, at the time of the fiercest parliamentary opposition to the Normanby Administration, called upon his "two millions of Precursors" to rally in defence of the Saxon government of the day. How far the mission of the great apostle of all tended to the tranquillization of Ireland, it would be a mere mockery to pretend to point out.

As if to meet the objection that the failure of such a mission is ascribable to the vices of the apostle, another affectionate despotism, exercised by a blameless apostle, was now extending in Ireland. In 1829, Ireland spent 6,000,000*l.* on proof-spirits; and there was not a town where men "beastly drunk" with whiskey were not staggering about the streets, ready for a fight on any pretence or none; and not a hamlet in the country where the hovel of the sot might not be seen, bare of comfort and teeming with disease. In the summer of that year, an American gentleman visited a friend at Belfast; and some must have afterwards thought of that blessing on the hospitable, that they "may entertain angels unawares."² Dr. Penny from America found his host, Dr. Edgar, of Belfast, meditating the means of securing the better observance of the Sabbath, and a purer social conduct altogether, in the city of his abode. Just before this, all good men in the cities of the United States had taken alarm at the spread of intemperance in their prosperous country, and were glad to embrace any method which might promise even a temporary check. The wisest of them were far from supposing, that moral restraint can be effectually and permanently secured by any mechanical organization; and there were many who seriously dreaded the consequences of imposing an artificial check, which, if it gave way, would plunge the victim into the worse sin of perjury, and utterly degrade him in his own eyes. If the dispossessed devil should return, he would inevitably bring with him others worse than himself. And the testimony of physicians soon proved but too plainly that there were frequent violations of the pledge, and hopeless relapses into

Father
Mathew.

¹ Annual Register, 1836, p. 302.

² Hall's Ireland, iii. p. 60.

intemperance, now made doubly foul by having become secret and wrapped up in lies. Still, it was so absolutely necessary that something should be done, that the wisest, with trembling tread, followed where the rash rushed in upon the sacred precincts of conscience, and lent a hand to work the machinery by which its free action was to be superseded. They thought they must take their chance with the adults for the sake of the young. They must run the risk of betraying the mature sinner into deeper guilt, to save the rising generation from overpowering temptation. They must shut up the spirit-shops and distilleries, and clear the streets of drunken men, and cleanse the private houses of the smell of rum; they must put the sin and its means and incentives out of sight, — out of the reach of every sense, — that it might occur as little as possible to any mind, and that children might not be infected into the destruction which had overtaken their fathers. Those who were most clearly sensible of the unsoundness of the principle of societies for individual moral restraint, yet dared not refuse to join this movement in a crisis, which, to use the words of an American clergyman, “threatened to overthrow society, and humanity itself, in the United States.” The work was in progress in that summer when Dr. Penny visited Dr. Edgar at Belfast. From what he heard, Dr. Edgar resolved that his efforts should be made in this direction; and he published his first appeal on behalf of temperance societies, in August, 1829. In the course of a year, four travelling-agents dispersed his tracts all over the island. By keeping the subject constantly before the public eye, he caused knowledge, as well as interest, to spring up in every direction; and it was not long before thoughtful men in all parts of Ireland had become aware that four-fifths of the crime brought up for justice, three-fourths of the hopeless beggary at that period, and an immeasurable amount of disease and mental suffering, proceeded from the practice of spirit-drinking.¹ The Surgeon-General for Ireland testified, that, in Dublin, nearly one-fourth of the deaths of adults were caused by spirit-drinking; a county magistrate of Antrim furnished a list of forty-eight persons who had perished from the same cause, within two miles of his house, and within his own recollection; and there was abundant proof that in extensive neighborhoods not one dwelling was pure from the vice. Here was scope for the operations of an affectionate despotism. A fitting apostle came, and the experiment was tried.

From that summer of 1829, temperance societies had been formed here and there, — the first being in New Ross, ^{Temperance movement.} proposed and opened by the Rev. George Carr, a clergyman of the Established Church. In course of time, some

¹ Hall's Ireland, iii. p. 60.

inhabitants of Cork, — a clergyman, a Quaker, a slater, and a tailor, — anxious to accomplish a similar object in their city, commended the enterprise to a man, popular above every one in the place, and liberal enough to be on good terms with men of all opinions, — a Capuchin friar, and superior of the order, by name Theobald Mathew.¹ It was some years after the first movement that he gave his mind and heart to the work, and thereby became the great moral, as O'Connell was the political, apostle of Ireland.

It must be allowed, that something beyond the morality of the case might probably be in the minds of the followers of Father Mathew. Springs of the movement. Of the two millions whom he had in a few months pledged to temperance, there were, no doubt, many who supposed that some great crisis was at hand which required this act of self-denial from all true Irishmen; that they might be up and awake, have their wits about them, and be ready for action, — whether Victoria should come to restore the Catholic Church, or the Liberator to be King of Ireland, or repeal should make every man's plot of ground fruitful in potatoes. It was a prevalent belief among the peasantry, that Father Mathew could work miracles; and some even declared that he had raised a person from the dead. The terrific zeal with which the people rushed into a condition of temperance, shows an extraordinary strength of expectation, whatever the object of it might be; and there is no question of the fact, that the political leaders in Ireland considered it of importance to organize and train the water-drinkers of Ireland into a force, with its marching companies, its brass bands, and its community of sentiment. These things show, not only the blessing that it was to the Irish to have for an apostle a man so disinterested as Father Mathew, but also how insecure and dangerous is government by affectionate despotism, which may always be liable to be appropriated by the most artful and unscrupulous agitator for his own purposes. After a year or two from the crowding of the country-people into Limerick to take the pledge, in such multitudes as to break down iron railings, and cause deaths from trampling and pressure, — within a year or two of the time when Father Mathew found it necessary to travel among his hundreds of thousands of disciples, because their thronging to him was dangerous to life and limb, — it was noticed that the Irish character appeared to have sensibly changed.² If, as has been said, the rebellion of 1798 was put down by force of whiskey, and not of arms, it had now evidently become of first-rate importance, that the hosts of sober, grave-faced men, who came marching to the temperance field, without fun and frolic, and with no noise but that of their practised

¹ Hall's Ireland, i. p. 33.

² Annual Register, 1839, Chron. p. 248.

bands of music, should not be driven or led into rebellion; for it was clear that whiskey would not now put them down. It must be hoped that the evil-disposed would find it less easy now than formerly to lead or drive them into rebellion; for assuredly rebellion would henceforth be a more formidable thing than it had hitherto been. Here were two millions of men, of a passionate nature, suddenly debarred from an accustomed outlet of passion and animal spirits, and, by the same change, left with a large amount of time on their hands, and with heads cool for thought and device. If they had had more knowledge and a sufficiency of good leaders, this would have been the opportunity — the finest ever offered in the history of their country — for attaching them to the English connection, by showing to them the benefits of that connection under the Normanby government, and the far greater blessings which must accrue upon their being merely deserved. Now was the golden opportunity for beginning a sound political education, if only the great political apostle had been worthy of the honor of his post. This could not have redeemed Ireland, directly or immediately; for the great underlying mischief was still untouched: but it might have somewhat softened the horrors of the impending doom of Ireland; and it would at least have mitigated the pain on every hand, if that doom had overtaken a nation of thoughtful, rational men, striving with courageous prudence and energy against their fate, amidst the respect of a sympathizing world, instead of a mass of helpless and heart-wrung sufferers, betrayed by selfish or senseless agitators, and beguiled to the last by visions conceived in nonsense and vanishing in woe. Father Mathew did his work, — did it in purity of heart and devotedness of soul. O'Connell perverted it, as we shall hereafter see. He seized upon the new gravity and critical leisure which Father Mathew had evoked, — he seized upon the minds all alive with wonder, and the hearts all glowing with gratitude at the blessed change wrought by a general temperance in health and home; and turned them full into the channel of his repeal agitation. He called, and probably believed, his rule over the Catholic Irish an affectionate despotism; but we can hardly conceive of his influence being more fatal to his trusting countrymen, if he had laid waste their fields with actual firebrands instead of with those of the tongue; and driven them from their homes with curses, instead of unsettling their lives with cruel promises of fabulous good. Ireland has been abundantly cursed with barbarous despots; but it may be doubted whether any one of them, in the long course of centuries, has perpetrated such effectual cruelty as the despot whom his victims called their Liberator, and hoped to see their King.

Father Mathew did his work, on the whole, well, — unquestion-

ably with as much singleness of aim as devotion of soul. Wherever he had been, blessings sprang up, as if he had indeed been the heaven-sent friend that he was taken to be. The water-springs gave out health and refreshment, and the daily food had a new relish. The dull eye grew bright; the mad pulse subsided; the staggering gait became a manly tread. The cabin roof kept out the rain; the decent table, with decent seats round it, appeared again in the middle of the lately empty room. There was a bed now, inviting to a sleep which had become light and sweet. The chest gradually filled with clothes, and the stocking in the thatch grew heavy with money. The wrangling voice, roaring curses, or tipsy songs, grew gentle and cheerful. The very echoes — at least the celebrated ones — of Killarney, and the mountain-passes sought by strangers, had changed their tone and theme, and now promised coffee instead of whiskey to the guides on their return. The distilleries were shut up by dozens; and the little suspicious clouds of blue smoke which used to curl away over the heathery knolls in the wilds, seemed to have whiffed away altogether. The grog-shops were changed into coffee-kitchens, and men laid their wits together in speculations about the tactics of O'Connell and the fate of Ireland, instead of breaking one another's heads in drunken frays. There was a large increase, in the very first year, in the number of depositors in savings-banks: at the end of two years, when the number of the pledged exceeded two millions and a half, no one of the whole host had appeared before judge or jury. Ireland had before paid away six millions in one year for proof-spirit: now, in two years, the consumption, for all purposes whatever, had lessened to little more than one half.¹ The drawback on the satisfaction of all this was, that the principle on which the reform proceeded was not altogether sound, and the reform itself could not therefore be permanent in all its entirety. When the superstitious disciple kneeled down before the heaven-sent friar, spoke the oath, received the sign of the cross and the uniform blessing, and then had the medal and card put into his hand, it was in a firm belief that some tremendous plague would come upon him if he broke his pledge; that Father Mathew knew men's thoughts, and had a divine power to heal and to save; and that some divine virtue resided in the medal and card. Father Mathew did not originate the superstitions; but he thought it hopeless to contend with them. "If I could prevent them," he said in a letter, "without impeding the glorious cause, they should not have been permitted; but both are so closely entwined, that the tares cannot be pulled out without plucking up the wheat also. The evil will correct itself; and the good, with the divine assistance, will remain and be per-

¹ Porter's Progress, sec. v. p. 54.

manent.”¹ It needs no showing that the temperance movement of Father Mathew is thus reduced from a secure moral reform to a temporary enthusiasm, in as far as the superstitions are included within its scope. It is a rational hope that much seed may have fallen into good ground; but the sower has grievously erred in consigning some to soil where it cannot take root, but must wither away. It is, however, a most impressive fact, that, by one of the affectionate despotisms co-existing with Lord Mulgrave's eminently constitutional rule, two millions and a half of gay or brutal drunkards were turned into a corps of the most thoughtful and emotional men in Ireland.

4. There were persons and parties who believed that Ireland would be best redeemed by a cure of her notorious political corruption; and that that cure might be best ^{The franchise and registration.} wrought by such a machinery of supervision as would, in fact, restrict the franchise within what were called safe limits. When men related to each other how landlords in Ireland had cut up their estates to make small freeholds; what droves of ignorant serfs were carried to the polling-booths to vote in a mass as their landlord bade them; how these freeholders suddenly passed over from the dominion of their landlords to that of their priests, and how this led to the disfranchisement of the forties, — they were apt to agree that a state of things so bad as to have caused that disfranchisement must be most radically cured by an extension of the same process, or of an equivalent safeguard. From such views and consultations issued Lord Stanley's Registration Bill for Ireland of 1840.

There was no dispute about the enormity of the abuses of the franchise in Ireland. Lord Melbourne's government waited only for a further settlement of the registration machinery of England and Scotland to take in hand the reform of such corruption in Ireland as was practised by means of registration certificates. It was not difficult for a man to get registered three or four times over, obtaining a certificate each time; and, of course, it was easy enough to make these certificates passports for fictitious votes. In order to guard against this and other abuses, Lord Stanley's measure proposed a method and machinery ^{Lord Stanley's Registration Bill.} of registration so onerous and irksome as would, in the opinion of government and of a majority in Parliament, act as a virtual disfranchisement.² If every vote might be annually revised, and an appeal on the part of the voter must be made to the judge once a year, it could not be believed that voters, circumstanced as multitudes of the Irish tenantry were, would or could undergo such a discipline for the sake of the privilege of the franchise. Lord J. Russell thought this Bill the

¹ Hall's Ireland, i. p. 43 (note).

² Hansard, lii. pp. 623-628.

most formidable attack yet made on the principles of the Reform Act.¹ The aim of the reform legislation was to extend and facilitate the exercise of the franchise, while this proposed method of registration threw every possible difficulty and discouragement in the way. As the case was, however, one which could not be neglected, and a bad measure would be carried if a good one were not proposed, the ministers bestirred themselves to prepare an Irish Registration Bill which should drive out Lord Stanley's. The ministers did not disguise their apprehensions of the effect of the opposition measure, if carried, nor that they conceived its operation, if not its intent, to be to counteract the emancipation measure of 1829, by rendering it difficult or impossible for the poorer — that is, the Catholic — portion of Ireland to send their fair share of representatives to Parliament. Lord John Russell pointed to the much-dreaded power of O'Connell in Ireland as little formidable while the Irish should have faith in the justice and good-will of the British Parliament. "That," said he, "I believe to be the state of things now."² But let this Bill pass; show that you are determined, step by step, to take away the franchise from the people of Ireland, to disable them from sending Roman Catholics as members of this House; obtain that supremacy, if you can, which you have not had for many years; indulge in the triumph which the minority would then indulge in over the majority; insult, vilify, and abuse the Roman Catholics; tell them that the people are ignorant, degraded, and priest-ridden, and speak of those priests in a tone of contumely and contempt: do all this, and you will have done more for repeal than any thing the honorable and learned gentleman has been able to effect by his speeches upon this subject." Such language as this from a member of the Cabinet indicates what was felt of the extremity of the risk. Lord Stanley and his friends naturally *protested against the charge of insidiously contriving to narrow the franchise, and to keep the Catholic representatives out of Parliament.* Sir R. Peel was among those who thus protested. It is most probable that they meant, as men in Parliament always do mean, only what they considered good, — to cut off abuses, and leave the franchise sound; and, if that operation should issue in giving less power than before to the ignorant Catholic population, they could not pretend to think that consequence any great evil. But they, by their very vindication of their intentions, exposed themselves to the charge of not understanding the conditions of the suffrage in the country districts of Ireland, where, whether they knew it or not, this Bill would act as a sweeping disfranchisement. If they knew this, they could not quarrel with the charges of their opponents: if they did not know it, they ought to have known it.

¹ Hansard, liv. p. 202.

² Hansard, liv. p. 213.

The danger was from this state of things being little understood by the greater number of members in the House. If the ministers were alarmed at the outset of Lord Stanley's enterprise, they might well be in a panic as the summer drew on. The second reading of the Bill was carried by a majority of sixteen, on the 26th of March. On the question of going into committee on the 20th of May, there was a majority of three against ministers.¹ They were beaten in every attempt to throw out their opponents on any point whatever.² O'Connell grew savage; and the more violent supporters of the Bill exasperated his passion by insults which no man of flesh and blood could be expected to endure. When, on this first night in committee, he said that this was a Bill for trampling on the liberties of the people of Ireland, several members shouted in his face, — whistled in his face, — laughed full in his face. At each insult he repeated the words, — the inattention of the chairman allowing the scene to go on, — and, after the third repetition of the assertion, in his most emphatic manner, Mr. O'Connell brought matters to a crisis, by exclaiming, "If you were ten times as beastly in your uproar and bellowing, I should still feel it to be my duty to interpose to prevent this injustice."³ On being called to account, some of his humor peeped out in his appeal to natural history. "Bellowing" was certainly the right word, he said; and what creatures but beasts were able to bellow? The uproar showed the extremity of the hope and fear of parties in one way; and then the obstructions and struggles in committee showed the same thing in another way. No means and devices were spared to delay the progress of the Bill; and, on the 6th of July, Lord Stanley gave in, for this session. His tone was, reasonably enough, one of triumph, while acknowledging the certainty of defeat by delay, if he did not withdraw his measure.⁴ He repudiated the censure most prominently put forward about his Bill, — that it did not raise any question about the franchise, — avowing that the reform of the registration was the aim of the measure. He pointed with pride to the three hundred members who had sustained an opposition Bill against the whole power of the government through ten divisions, in nine of which the ministers were beaten; and he promised a renewal of the struggle early in the next session.

In the interval, an association was formed in Ulster, for the object of procuring a reform of the registration; and Lord Stanley made some few and not very important changes in his Bill, on their information. He introduced his measure on the 2d of February; and the government brought in their rival Bill two days afterwards.⁵ There is something painful in

¹ Hansard, liii. p. 157.² Hansard, liv. p. 454.³ Hansard, p. liv. 1093.⁴ Hansard, lv. p. 459.⁵ Hansard, lv. p. 274.

the retrospect of this whole transaction. It was now several years since the Reform Bill had passed, and nothing had been done for electoral improvement in Ireland. The Whig government offered reasons and excuses in plenty; but nothing that they could say obviated the general impression that that must be a government too weak to rule which cannot get its proper business done till it is roused into a spirit of rivalry with the opposition. Lord Howick had voted steadily with Lord Stanley on his registration measure, from the conviction that some reform of the kind was imperatively needed. The ministers promised a rival measure; the Ulster association, and their nine defeats on Lord Stanley's move, quickened their speed; and their Bill was ready to run a race with Lord Stanley's through the next session. But they brought dislike and some contempt on their Bill and themselves, by the unstatesmanlike and somewhat petty method which they adopted now, as too often before, of tacking to their measure—as a sort of postscript—a proposal of vast importance, which seemed to demand previous announcement, and a special and well-prepared discussion. It was one of the most painful signs of the weakness of the successive Whig ministries, that they had recourse to the vulgar expedient of surprises, almost as often as they had any serious work to do. For the moment, it appeared to give them some advantage, by depriving the opposition of all opportunity for immediate concert, and by exciting afresh an emotion of hope and gratitude among the dissatisfied Liberal party throughout the country; but such emotions grow weaker and less responsive under a series of surprises, and the opposition learned by experience how to act in such cases. In the instance of the Reform Bill, when all the world knew that the men came into power for the purpose of doing a particular work, it was prudent and eminently beneficial to keep secret to the last moment the scope and details of the measure on which every man, in and out of Parliament, was speculating. But the perpetual repetition of secrecy and surprising announcements took, after a time, the appearance of a trick; and especially when, as in the case before us, an essential and wholly unlooked-for change was arbitrarily connected with a Bill which professed something quite different. The Government Bill, after treating of the registration of voters in Ireland, went on to propose a radical change in the franchise,—its establishment on “a basis distinct and independent,” and entirely new. The so-called Registration Bill was in fact an unannounced new Reform Bill for Ireland. The valuation under the poor-law—of which we shall presently speak—was to be the entirely new basis; and an occupier of a tenement of the yearly value of 5*l.*, under a term of not less than fourteen years, was to enter upon the rights of

suffrage hitherto enjoyed by persons having a beneficial interest to the amount of 10%.¹

Those who most seriously desired the extension of the franchise in Ireland were perhaps the most concerned at this method of proposing it. They felt that a question so great was injured by such treatment of it. The ministers had no reason to feel elated by the reception of their measure. Lord Howick, and others who had acted with him in the preceding session, now, when they saw the matter really taken in hand, joined the government party again; the debate was full and earnest, extending over four nights; yet the ministerial majority for the second reading was only five.² Their opponents took for granted that they always knew that they could not carry their Bill. There is no need to attribute to them such guilt as would be implied in sporting with the expectations of the disfranchised thousands in Ireland for party purposes; but they cannot be acquitted of the levity or miscalculation, — to say the least of it, — of bringing forward a measure of such tantalizing promise, under circumstances eminently unfavorable to its success. Lord J. Russell's next course was not one which could command the respect of any party. After the division, he announced the desire of the government to lose no time with the Bill, and that he should therefore bring it forward again the next Monday. When Monday came, however, he proposed to defer the discussion till after Easter,³ as he found many members impressed by the proposal of the new franchise, and he wished to obtain more full and accurate information before the matter was further discussed. It is not to be wondered at that this awkward explanation was received with "shouts of laughter;" nor that the opposition taunted ministers with having never entertained any expectation of passing the all-important provision of their Bill. They had had the recess in which to prepare for what they knew must be a critical struggle; and now, after the second stage of the business, and after many protestations of a desire to lose no time, they asked for a pause, in order to procure information enough to proceed upon in the discussion of their own measure. The postponement proposed was to the 23d of April; and from Lord Stanley himself down to the lowest Irish newspapers in the repeal interest, there was one loud protestation of belief that the real aim of the ministers was to drive Lord Stanley's measure to the end of the session, and not to carry their own.⁴ Lord Stanley, meantime, gave early notice that he should contest to the last the proposal of a 5% qualification. The immediate consequence was, that, prior to all discussion, the ministers raised the qualification from 5% to 8%.

¹ Hansard, lv. p. 279.

² Hansard, lvi. p. 1126.

³ Hansard, lvi. p. 1153.

⁴ Hansard, lvi. p. 1156.

When the House went into committee on the 26th of April, Lord Howick moved an amendment on the first clause, designed for the better ascertainment of that "beneficial interest" of the occupier, which was practically a constant difficulty in the determining of rating and electoral qualification.¹ The amendment, in fact, brought before the committee the question whether the amount of poor-rate paid, should be the sole qualification of a voter, whether he had a beneficial interest in his holding or not; or whether a beneficial interest should be maintained as a test of the right to vote. Sir R. Peel and others saw that the fate of the amendment would decide that of the Bill. But, when Lord Howick's amendment was carried by a majority of twenty-one, Lord J. Russell proposed delay, to consider whether ministers must withdraw their measure.² They concluded not to withdraw it, as Lord Howick declared that his amendment proposed a merely supplementary qualification, and not one which should supersede that provided in the Bill. From this time, the scene in committee was painful and humbling,—every Liberal member who came forward had something essential to propose about the franchise, different from what any one else had thought of; the government were irresolute and changeable; the opposition laughed and triumphed. The final division took place on the qualification clause, when there was a majority of eleven against ministers, supported as they were by O'Connell and his influence.³ If all else had been favorable, the vacillation of ministers among the propositions of their own supporters was enough to insure the loss of their Bill. They seemed to be influenced by the last speaker, after the manner of persons ignorant of their business; and they shifted the amount of rating again and again, as if they did not know that, with every such change, they were proposing to admit or to exclude half or two-thirds of a constituency with a stroke of the pen. Here, however, was a close of the unhappy business. It was impossible to go on; and Lord J. Russell moved that the chairman should quit the chair.⁴ Nor could Lord Stanley's Bill be proceeded with during that session. The whole transaction ended without other results than aggravated provocation of the Irish, who had been tantalized to no purpose,—great loss of the time and patience of Parliament,—and an irrecoverable decline of the Whig Administration in the esteem and good-will of their supporters, and the estimation of the nation at large. Here was an end too—and this was perhaps no bad result—of all speculation about the cure of political corruption being the true means of the redemption of Ireland. If Ireland was to wait for this, it would be too late

¹ Hansard, lvii. p. 1091.

³ Hansard, lvii. p. 1274.

² Hansard, lvii. p. 1181.

⁴ Hansard, lvii. p. 1284.

to redeem her at all ; for it was clear that electoral renovation would not be granted to her while there were two parties in the British Parliament.

5. Some of the most earnest and thoughtful of the friends of Ireland were among the many who looked for her redemption, at the other end of the scale, from the advocates of an affectionate despotism. Instead of desiring that the people should have every thing done for them, and be kept out of sight of the law which they hated and distrusted, these friends of the Irish proposed to induce a knowledge and love of the function and prevalence of law by making the inhabitants of Ireland learn self-government by the discipline of good municipal institutions. England was now sprinkled all over with little republics, where her citizens would receive the best political education in the best manner ; and it was thought that a similar system would do for Ireland all that she needed, by improving her people socially and politically, and bringing her into a relation with England which would silence for ever the cry of repeal. The proposal was a good and great one ; and, but for the deep underlying mischief, it might have largely availed, in course of years. But this mischief was exactly in the way, in the present case. It must precisely intercept the beneficial results of municipal reform ; for, among all the curses attributable to the insecurity of title to the possession of land in Ireland, none is more fatal than its prevention of the growth of a middle class.

There was no question on which the passions of the two great parties in Parliament became more fierce, as the debate was renewed from year to year, than on this, — of municipal reform. There was hardly a man, in or out of Parliament, who did not take a side, with all the decision and certainty, and all the wonder and wrath at his opponents, which attend upon the discussion of vital political questions.¹ It was not only that Lord John Russell declared in his place that this was a "vital question to the present Administration : " it was also known to be vital to the fate of Ireland, — whether she was to be governed on one set of principles or the opposite ; and again, it was felt to be vital to the fate of Great Britain too, as determining whether she was to halt between two opinions, or to decide finally for that principle of renovation and progress of which the policy of her latest years had been the exponent. Considering these things, the strife could not but be fierce : it was hardly possible for individual opponents to be just to each other ; and for the respective parties it was quite impossible. We, however, at the distance of ten or twelve years, can see things more plainly than any one saw them then. We have had grave admonition and

¹ Hansard, xxxvi. p. 209.

mournful rebuke about our confident judgment, our positiveness, our presumptuous and shallow censures of public men and of our own antagonists in argument. While still only half-seeing about Ireland, — still “sounding on a dim and perilous way” in investigating the sources of her woes, — we are not so dark and insensible as we were ten years ago; and we are now able to perceive, that, if both parties and almost all individual men were wrong, both parties and all leading men were also right.

The views of the respective parties, as declared by their spokesmen, were these: —

The Whig ministers and the Liberal party generally regarded municipal reform in Ireland as an essential part of the Municipal principle. scheme of institutional renovation which the nation had deliberately adopted. It was the proper and necessary finish of parliamentary reform in all the three kingdoms, and borough reform in England, Wales, and Scotland. They considered it especially indispensable in regard to Ireland, because Ireland needed, above every other part of the empire, an identification with England in her political privileges and fortunes. They regarded municipal reform as more necessary in Ireland than elsewhere, because an abuse existed in Ireland, remediable by these means, perfectly singular in its mischief and intolerableness, — the injurious distinction of creeds established by the existing corporation system.¹ In the time of James I., municipal officers who would not enforce Protestant modes of worship in their respective towns were ejected, and creatures of the government put in their places; and the new holders of office surrendered the rights and privileges of their townsmen into the king's hands, and accepted fresh charters which allowed scarcely any powers to the local residents, and left the nomination to all important offices to the government. The government nominees had power to appoint their successors; and thus the exclusion of the Catholic majority from local power and privilege was as complete as the Protestant minority chose. In 1672, some relaxation of the Protestant monopoly took place in virtue of the “new rules” issued by the Irish government. But the Revolution, sixteen years afterwards, annihilated the virtue of these rules; and all social advantage derivable from municipal institutions was again monopolized by Protestants. Within this monopoly, smaller monopolies arose, till, in many Irish towns, the corporate bodies had become mere family parties, — all offices being held by relations and dependents of the chief member, or of a great Protestant landlord in the neighborhood; and even the parliamentary member being merely a nominee of these nominees. These usurped powers became actually subjects of proprietorship; being

¹ Polit. Dict. ii. p. 392.

transmitted by inheritance, openly sold to competitors, and recognized as a ground of compensation by the national government when the union interfered with the right of these "patrons" or proprietors to send members to Parliament. Under such a holding of municipal power and privilege, there could of course be no impartial administration of justice. No one can wonder at the prevalent distrust and hatred of the law in Ireland, when it is considered how hopeless was the chance of the Catholic and the man of liberal politics in a locality where justice must be sought, if at all, from magistrates, juries, and minor officials, who were chosen for their zeal in an adverse religious and political faith. Then, again, a large number — in some cases almost the whole body — of burgesses were non-residents, patronized by the officials, and introduced to borough privileges in swarms, while the inhabitants were left helpless, to be victimized by their impertinent oppressors. The charity funds, the lands, the borough-houses, the water-works, — all the property which should have made their towns healthful and handsome, and have relieved their poor, and educated the young, and raised the condition of the whole local population, — went into the pockets of half-a-dozen men, or into utter waste and loss. The commissioners' reports tell of thousands of acres of land which would, at that date (1833), have readily brought in 1*l.* an acre, being let, on leases of ninety-nine years, for 1*s.* an acre, or less; of tolls and customs being pocketed, as a matter of course, by the mayor and aldermen, while the streets were unpaved, dark, and never cleaned; of the noble water-works of Archbishop Bolton at Cashel being destroyed from utter neglect, — miles of underground conduits being choked up, and the water turned off for the convenience of a miller, — the whole being recoverable by an outlay of 500*l.*, while the corporate officers were making presents to one another of many thousands annually, by iniquitous leases and bargains. Here was a case as strong as need be. In desiring to reform it, and in stating the inestimable value of free municipal institutions, the Whig government and the Liberal party were eminently right. Where they were wrong was in assuming too easily that free municipal institutions would answer in Ireland as in England; in concluding that the true reason for the opposition of their antagonists was a fear for the Protestant Church in Ireland, which overpowered all consideration for the good of the majority; and in unscrupulously charging their adversaries with a predilection for tyranny, in their advocacy of a centralizing principle of government for Ireland, and with rapacity and corruption in desiring to retain the profits of the old system for their local partisans.

The Conservatives, on the other hand, seem to have been right in perceiving that the peculiar condition of society in Ireland must

prevent the full and free working of popular institutions. They seem to have laid hold of the fearful truth recently expressed by one who loves Ireland too well to be of any party, in regard to her interests. "A government based on popular institutions," says Mr. Pim, "fails to secure order, unless it have the support of the people."¹ Ireland appears to labor under the difficulty of having aristocratic social institutions without an aristocracy; and the mechanism of a popular government, inapplicable to its present social condition, because it does not possess an educated middle class, by whom these popular institutions might be worked." The aim of the Conservatives was to prevent the assignment to Ireland of "the mechanism of a popular government, inapplicable to its present social condition." They had a perfect right to prefer a centralizing principle of government for a country in so peculiar a condition; and the question of their credit should have depended altogether on the merits or demerits of their centralizing scheme. From this point of view, they appear to have been more clear-sighted than the Whigs; while, from another, they seem to have committed the grossest error belonging to the time and occasion. They adhered, consciously or unconsciously, to the hope and expectation which founded the Church in Ireland, and has kept it there, *vi et armis*, as a missionary establishment. "For the last three centuries," said a contemporary writer, "Ireland has only had a provisional government, constituted for a state of things dependent on the duration of Popery, which was supposed to be a temporary evil."² To this fatally foolish supposition, the Conservatives adhered, in their opposition to municipal reform, — not avowedly, and probably not consciously; but all that they proposed, and every step when they opposed, was vitiated by a tacit assumption, that, while the Catholics were to be cared for, it was as a suffering multitude who were to be Protestants ere long. This gave a provisional air to the proposals of the Conservatives, and disabled them from appreciating the Whig aim of settling matters on a basis which would endure. Again, it was natural for the Conservatives to remonstrate against the rashness — as they thought it — of encouraging the unhappy disposition of the Irish to hanker after some vague political remedy for miseries purely social or moral. It was natural that they should look upon the Whigs, when holding out unreasonable hopes to the Irish from municipal reform, as too much resembling O'Connell in his promises of repeal and its blessings. But they were felt to be quite as wrong as their adversaries ever were in charging those adversaries with vulgar popularity-hunting, with hiding a fear of O'Connell under a mask

¹ Condition and Prospects of Ireland, p. 190.

² London Review, October, 1839, p. 101.

of political action, and with treating Ireland with a stupid and insulting good-will, like that of a man who gives a clever child a watch that will not go, — moreover, at the end of an explanation of the beauty and value of watches.

Both parties desired, earnestly and perhaps equally, the sweeping away of the intolerable abuse of the existing corporations. They differed, broadly and passionately, as to what the substitute should be; and they resembled one another but too much in the pertinacity with which they affixed discreditable imputations upon each other.

The history of the five years' struggle to establish "normal schools" of political education in seventy-one towns of Ireland, where 900,000 inhabitants might begin their training in free citizenship, was briefly this: —

In 1833, the Irish-corporation commissioners began their work of inquiry. In 1836, the royal speech at the opening of the session expressed a hope that Parliament would be able to apply a remedy to the abuses of the Irish corporations, founded upon the same principles as the Municipal-reform Acts for England and Scotland.¹ The Irish Attorney-general, Mr. O'Loughlen, early introduced the Ministerial Bill, which was allowed to be read without opposition, a second time, on the 29th of February, as a sort of pledge that all parties were disposed to abolish the existing system, whatever they might do towards establishing a better.² After this, Sir R. Peel explained his views, which were, in their main points, that, in the existing condition of Ireland, it was hopeless that free institutions would work, for want of the class specially needed to work them; that therefore the place of the old corporations, now to be abolished, should not be filled by new corporate bodies, which would only introduce new dissension and corruption; but that the sheriffs and recorders should be appointed by the Crown, the local affairs of the inhabitants being managed by commissioners, chosen by popular election.³ He did not conceive it possible to deprive the body of existing freemen of their rights, because they had long ago become proprietary and hereditary; and he believed, finally, that the only way to preserve any impartiality in the administration of provincial affairs in Ireland was to vest the principal appointments in the Crown, as, from the great preponderance of Catholics, the exclusion of Protestants now, under a system of popular election, would be as complete and unfair as the exclusion of Catholics had hitherto been, under a system of self-election in the corporations. This last reason was not one which increased the popular opinion of Sir R. Peel's wisdom; as it was clear that it begged the question of the im-

¹ Hansard, xxxi. p. 4.

² Hansard, xxxi. p. 496.

³ Hansard, xxxi. pp. 1050-1076.

partiality of the Crown, and it could proceed only upon the supposition that the Catholics would have the same confidence as Sir R. Peel himself in that impartiality.¹ Lord F. Egerton moved, in accordance with the views of Sir R. Peel, the abolition of the old corporations, without the creation of any new; decreeing the government of towns by officers appointed by the Crown. He would even have the commissioners for the administration of borough property provided in the same manner. This motion was thrown out by a large majority. But its theory met with better success in the Lords. There, the Bill was "amended" by cutting out of it all the clauses relating to the constitution of new corporate bodies.² Out of 140 clauses, 106 had been in substance omitted, while 18 had been added; and, while the "amended Bill" abolished corporate institutions entirely, it actually preserved to many of the officials who profited by the old system the power and emolument of their situations. Of course, this was not to be endured. The Commons rejected the amendments, and sent back the Bill to the Lords in nearly its original state. Lord Melbourne was outvoted by a majority of 97 in an attempt to get the Bill reconsidered.³ It was sent down to the Commons, with a statement of their Lordships' reasons for adhering to their amendments. On the 30th of June, Lord John Russell moved that the amendments should be considered that day three months: the House agreed; and thus the Bill was lost for that session.⁴

In introducing the Bill again in the next February, Lord J. Russell was understood to intimate that the Melbourne Administration would stand or fall by it. It was, he said, "a vital question to the present Administration;" so the opposition knew what they had to expect and to do, and the contention was very fierce. Lord F. Egerton repeated his motion of the preceding year.⁵ The debate lasted over three nights, and was of great interest from the clear grounds taken by both parties. The Reformers dwelt upon the sacrifice of all other interests to that of the Church, which they charged upon the Conservatives, urging home upon them their fear of the Catholic majority of Ireland, — a fear which was by no means unreasonable, considering the oppression under which the Catholics had suffered, and the possible effects of re-action. Lord Stanley avowed, in committee, that, if he saw the Church in a more secure position, some of his strongest objections to the Bill would be removed; but it was not candid to represent this as the only ground of the opposition. Their highest and principal ground was the dissimilarity of Irish and English character and circumstances, which rendered

¹ Hansard, xxxi. p. 1318.

² Hansard, xxxiv. p. 963.

³ Hansard, xxxvi. p. 657.

⁴ Hansard, xxxiv. p. 218.

⁵ Hansard, xxxiv. p. 1107.

it impossible that the same institutions should work alike in the two countries. It was remarked that some of the opposition speakers, who had done their utmost in debate, were absent from the division.¹ The ministers had a majority of 80. On the third reading, their majority fell to 55.²

The day before the second reading in the House of Lords, a gathering of Peers took place at Apsley House, to agree upon what should be done. A considerable number were for throwing out the Bill at once; but the Duke of Wellington overruled them, with advice which, by their account, was highly characteristic. He willed that the Bill should go into committee; and, when asked how he would then have it dealt with, he said it would be time enough to think of that when it was there. Before this, a report had got abroad, which was now believed,—that the Conservative leaders would pass a Municipal-reform Bill, if complete security was at the same time afforded to the Church; though it was not easy to see how this could be done, to the satisfaction of the Conservatives, but by still subordinating the Catholic majority to a favored Protestant minority. The next move of the Duke of Wellington confirmed the rumor. On the 5th of May, he proposed a postponement of the discussion, on the ground of wishing to see what would be done in the other House about the tithe and poor-law questions; and he obtained a majority over ministers of 77.³ The House of Commons proceeded slowly; and, when the 9th of June arrived, the Lords again postponed their debate, leaving the Premier helpless under their majority of 86.⁴ The speedy dissolution of Parliament, in consequence of the death of the King, stopped the progress of the measure; and thus again, at the risk of great irritation in the Irish against the Peers, it once more stood over to another session.

This was the date of the famous compromise before related, when Lord J. Russell consented to the sacrifice of the appropriation principle for the sake of Sir R. Peel's surrender of his opposition to the Irish Municipal-reform Bill. All went smoothly for some time,—the Conservatives fully admitting, that, if there were to be corporations at all, they should be appointed by popular election. But then came the question of the franchise; and the parties found it impossible to agree on the qualification. Sir R. Peel desired a 10*l.* qualification, with the test of rating. Lord J. Russell would admit either the parliamentary qualification of 10*l.*, or the test of rating with a 5*l.* qualification. Sir R. Peel would not yield. The ministers assembled their supporters at one of the government offices, to consult whether they could concede any thing further, for the sake of getting the Bill passed.

¹ Hansard, xxxvi. p. 958.

³ Hansard, xxxviii. p. 599.

² Hansard, xxxvii. p. 1110.

⁴ Hansard, xxxviii. p. 1329

It was decided that there should be no further compromise; and, on the 11th of June, they carried their point of the qualification by a majority of 20.¹ The Bill passed the Commons by a majority of 35. But, in the Lords, a modified 10*l.* qualification was substituted immediately.² Other amendments were introduced which it was wholly impossible for the authors of the measure to sanction. The Bill was bandied between the Houses, as it had been two years before, and dropped in exactly the same manner.³

In 1839, the royal speech declared the reform and amendment of the municipal corporations of Ireland to be essential to the interests of that country; and, in eight days afterwards, — on the 14th of February, — Lord Morpeth brought forward the subject again, for the fourth year in succession.⁴ By this time, the leaders of both parties were ready for further concession. The ministers proposed an 8*l.* qualification, with the test of rating to the poor-law. In towns where the poor-law should have been in operation for three years, the franchise was to be assimilated to the English. Sir R. Peel and Lord Stanley agreed to this proposal, and rebuked the inveteracy of opposition manifested by some of their own party.⁵ This opposition was carried into committee; but the Bill passed the Commons on the 15th of July. The Premier pointed out to the opposition Lords that by this time the Bill was almost their own, it being made up of a series of amendments in the parts which had been the subject of argument; but Lord Lyndhurst, in his apprehension that, “except in the northern province of Ireland, there would be in every town a Radical and Roman-Catholic mayor, a Radical and Roman-Catholic town-council, Radical and Roman-Catholic magistrates,” moved and carried an amendment about the franchise, with several others, which, again, it was impossible for the authors of the measure to submit to.⁶ Thus fruitlessly closed the fourth year of the debate. Lord Lyndhurst could not wonder if he was more unpopular in Ireland than any other man in the empire.

In 1840, the Bill passed rapidly through the Lower House, being supported by Sir R. Peel. Lord Lyndhurst was again ready for opposition; and his amendments were so many and so injurious to the measure, that it required much command of temper on every hand to bear quietly with so audacious a resistance to the conviction and will of the majority, — of the majority, that is, everywhere but in the House of Lords.⁷ There he car-

¹ Hansard, xliii. p. 561.

² Hansard, xliv. p. 1115.

³ Hansard, xlv. pp. 186, 187.

⁷ Hansard, lv. pp. 163–171.

² Hansard, xliii. p. 1070.

⁴ Hansard, xlv. p. 360.

⁶ Hansard, xlix. p. 751.

ried all before him, — carried his provisions for the patronage of the old freemen, his 10*l.* qualification, his frustration of the appointment of candidates for the shrievalty by the town-councils, and several other points. When the Bill was sent down to the Commons, they demurred at the amendments, held conferences, argued, and finally yielded; and the deteriorated and corrupted Bill became law on the 10th of August, 1840.¹

The main provisions of the Bill were these:² Ten corporate towns were continued as corporations under the provisions of the Act, — being constituted of mayor, aldermen, and burgesses. Thirty-seven smaller corporations were dissolved, — nineteen of which possessed corporate funds to the amount of 100*l.* a year and upwards, and eighteen which had corporate funds to a smaller amount. Any of these boroughs which had a population exceeding 3000, might have a charter on petition of the majority to the Queen in council. As for the others, their corporate funds were to be vested in commissioners, to be applied to public objects. Some towns were already supplied with commissioners, under a former Act. Those which had not any commissioners were divided into two classes; in the first of which were towns empowered to elect a board of commissioners, in the proportion of one commissioner to every 500 inhabitants; and in the second were the smaller towns whose corporate funds were to be administered by the poor-law guardians of the locality. The way was left open for the smaller towns to rise to the faculty of having commissioners, and of obtaining a charter of incorporation, when ready for the privilege. The franchise was a household suffrage, with a 10*l.* qualification. In other points, the Bill closely resembled the English Act.

There is no doubt about the beneficial operation of this measure, spoiled as it was. The sweeping away of the old corporations was a great blessing; and this, and the exclusion of the centralizing principle, reconciled the Liberal party to the passage of the Bill, in preference to waiting longer. How it might have fared with Ireland at this day under the undisturbed operation of the measure, many may dispute, but none can affirm; for the great underlying mischief was about to stir and heave, and overthrow all hope, that, by municipal reform or any other measure yet attempted, the redemption of Ireland was to be achieved.

6. As for those who acknowledged a deeper necessity than any of these, from having obtained a glimpse of the Certainty of maintenance. great underlying mischief, they desired a poor-law for Ireland, and had more to say in favor of their specific than sincere men were willing to controvert. Whether Ireland should have a poor-law of the nature of the English one, was perhaps,

¹ Hansard, iv. p. 1394.

² Polit. Dict. ii. p. 394.

of all the political questions of our time, the most difficult of decision. O'Connell himself, who was undoubtedly in earnest on this question, unmingled as it was with any party feelings and devices, vacillated for years between the perplexities on either hand. He, for once, took pains to learn and consider the economical considerations of the case; and, when they were fresh in his mind, was full of hope and joy for Ireland, and of gratitude, in which he called on all his countrymen to join, to the Whig Ministry which proposed the effectual boon. Then, again, his doubts would recur, — doubts whether the pauperism of Ireland could be ascertained so far as to justify an invocation to it to come and be fed; doubts whether it might not peril the souls, or at least injure the spiritual interests, of the Catholics, to interfere with their private alms-giving; doubts whether the mendicancy of the poor had not something holy in it with which it was impious to meddle; doubts whether the glory and grace of the Irish character would not disappear under the operation of sound economical principles and methods; and, finally, doubts whether the ordinary run of Irish landlords could or would support the poor of their own districts. Up to the year 1836, he had constantly opposed the introduction of any poor-law system into Ireland; and it is possible that some of the personal motives ascribed to him at the time — the dread of weakening the popular dependence upon himself, and of losing his influence by the assimilation of Ireland to England — might have been, more or less, the cause of his opposition; but, if so, all such considerations gave way before the disclosures of the commission of inquiry in 1836. It appears probable that the agitator himself was unaware of the misery of the Irish poor, — the abiding, unintermitting misery which they had come to regard as the condition of their life. This appears probable from the considerations that his own tenantry were in a very wretched condition under the management of middle-men, over whom he exercised no supervision; and that he met his countrymen only in the aspect of adorers of himself, — in worshipping crowds, on days of political business, or groups of watchers on holidays, who cheered on his beagles, and echoed the huntsman's cry, and laughed with delight at seeing the great liberator enjoying his sport. It is probable that the exposures of the commissioners' report were as new and terrific to O'Connell himself as to any member of the government; and that they overpowered for a time his worst tendencies, and made him, for a short interval, a single-hearted patriot. The period was very short. Under the impression of the dreadful anecdotes of the report, — of men lying for weeks on damp straw in a mud hovel, because they were too weak from hunger to rise and go in search of a better fate; of the feeding

on "yellow weed" and unripe potatoes; of the artificial spasms and vomitings induced for the sake of getting warmth and shelter in the cholera hospitals; while these things were fresh in his imagination, O'Connell wrote to the electors of Kilkenny on the absolute necessity of a poor-law for Ireland. He added to his reasons of necessity an offer of one more chance to England of escaping a repeal of the union. If she did not give Ireland a good poor-law, she must undergo repeal. He still feared mischief from the poor-law, because he could not, at least he did not, separate the abuses and fatal operation of the corrupted poor-law of Elizabeth from its principle; and he pointed to the economical and moral devastation it had caused in England as consequences certain to occur in Ireland: yet, so fearful was the existing wretchedness, that it scared him from all speculation for the future, and compelled him to call for a system of legal charity without a moment's delay. While it was preparing, he fell back somewhat from his new convictions; told the trades-unions that it was bad government that had made beggars; that good government was the best poor-law; that a poor-law would keep down wages, and increase pauperism; and that the House of Lords would make this law a means of subjecting the people to the great landlords. He should prefer a tax on absentees, to be applied in promoting emigration, and in maintaining asylums for the aged, the infant, and the sick.¹

In the session of 1837, when the Irish Poor-law Bill was introduced by the government, Mr. O'Connell declared that, seeing its necessity, he should not oppose it; but he assailed every important part of the measure, separately, while he declared himself a supporter of the whole. His pleas were curiously contradictory. The Irish would never enter workhouses; yet these houses would maintain men in idleness who ought to be at work upon the land. The land could not maintain the poor,—the production being only one-fourth that of England, and one-half what, considering the inferiority of the soil, it ought to be; yet this bill would make the people the slaves of the landlords. The natural poor-law—of sympathy—was the best; and Ireland's charity, hitherto the glory of Ireland, would be extinguished by the imposition of a legal charity: yet he would support asylums, and no other charitable institutions, willingly, because asylums for the infirm and sick could not encourage fraud and mendicancy. He declared that a poor-law would only swell the numbers—then amounting to nearly two millions and a half—of persons absolutely destitute for a large portion of every year; yet he ridiculed the notion of union-houses, because they would hold only 80,000, and claimed equal assistance for the two millions and a half. While protest-

¹ Hansard, xxxvi, p. 486.

ing his belief that the measure would aggravate pauperism, and suddenly extinguish private charity, he protested against the gradual introduction and extension of the institution, and claimed immediate and full rescue by means of it for the starving millions of his countrymen. Thus shifting were his views while he declared himself a supporter of the government, and voted for the Bill. He deserved, by his previous conduct, the imputation, that he was taking what could be got from England, while industriously providing for the failure of the measure by disgusting his countrymen with it beforehand; but the impression derived by an impartial reader from his speeches in Parliament is, that he really was perplexed by the difficulties of the case. His intellect had, in fact, by this time, become so injured by his habits of partiality and exaggeration, and tampering with truth for patriotic purposes, that it had really become irksome and difficult to him to entertain any question so serious in his own view as to compel him to balance the evidence of its respective sides. With all his astuteness in the conduct of intrigues, and the management of the Irish mind, he had become incapable of apprehending distinctions which were all-important in the consideration of measures founded on any principle; as, for instance, in his declaration of the next session, that the "strange distinction" between "poverty" and "destitution" was not practical,—was too nice for Ireland,—and so forth; whereas this distinction—the groundwork of the whole poor-law reform in England, and institution in Ireland—is as broad and palpable as the distinction between a householder and a vagrant. In that next session, of 1838, Mr. O'Connell took his stand decidedly—he said finally—against the measure.¹ He declared that he had before wanted moral courage to oppose it; but now he had grown older and somewhat firmer. The fact probably was, that the first agonizing impression of the misery of Ireland had worn off, and his natural prepossessions, as an adventurer, as a man of reckless passions, and as a Catholic, impressed with the blessedness and holiness of spontaneous almsgiving, now recovered their sway, and led him to oppose the introduction of an institution which was too regular and exact, too legal and impartial, too repressive of wrong, and favorable to homely good, to be otherwise than distasteful and alarming to him. In the final period of legislation, therefore, O'Connell went against the Bill, with his all forces; and among those forces he enlisted every truth of political economy which he could apply against a compulsory charity in general, and such treatment of the misery of Ireland in particular. His last appearance on this question in Parliament was in the character of a rigid political economist.

¹ Hansard, xl. p. 947.

The case was indeed perplexing enough to sounder thinkers than O'Connell; and his conduct may be regarded as a mere exaggeration of the thought of the time on this question. The very officials themselves were divided as to whether Ireland should have a poor-law or not. Some of the commissioners were in favor of it, and others against it; their third report was against it,—the Secretary for it. The greater number of political economists in England were for it; but a few of the most eminent were against it.

In an abstract view, the case was clear enough. The unbounded spontaneous charity of the Irish, which makes the family that have potatoes for the day take in and feed the family that have none, is a fatal encourager of recklessness; as the givers expect to be destitute and thus fed, in their turn. A legal charity would act as a check here. The imposition of rates upon the holders of the land would act as a regulator upon the fatal system of land-letting which prevailed in the south and west of Ireland; a system from which individuals could extricate themselves only by means of such an arrangement as this. The landlords must be brought to reason and thought and principle by the obligation to support their own poor. The occupiers would be benefited, — their expenses being shared more equally with the landlord; whereas the true incidence of the prevalent almsgiving was at present upon them. Instead of this indefinite expenditure, the occupier would now have one which he could estimate; and he would no doubt prefer laying out his money in improving his land to supporting men in idleness; and thus further means of prosperity would be continually growing. If Mr. O'Connell was right in saying that the Irish, with their love of uncontrolled freedom, would never enter the workhouses, well and good; since they could keep out of it only by maintaining themselves. If they did enter the workhouses, and idly stay there, — well and good too; for this would relieve the immediate pressure of competition for potato-grounds, and would afford opportunity for nominal rents to come down to the level of real ones, and some honesty might be introduced into transactions between landlord and tenant. A middle class might thus be growing up; a class of improving small farmers, interposed between the landlord and the cottier, for whom there had hitherto appeared no alternative between a precarious and transient occupation of land and mendicancy. With the class of farmers must grow up a class of *bonâ-fide* laborers. Thus would land and men improve together. There would be increased production from the land, — classes of rising men upon it, — a check upon the reckless increase of population, — an influx of capital, which would cause further production and improvement; and so on. Such was the expectation

of the advocates of an extension of the English poor-law to Ireland; and they added that no country ever afforded such favorable circumstances for the establishment of a poor-law as Ireland did at that time.

As for the opponents of the measure,—they dwelt upon the peculiarities of the Irish mind, religion, and social state. This was their ground. They would have had Ireland assisted by a legal charity in regard to the sick and infirm, and to a large scheme of emigration. Further than this they believed the system would not work; and they declared their expectation that the legal charity would be found not to supersede at all the pious almsgiving which had become the religious habit of the Catholic districts. No one seems to have spoken out about the deep underlying mischief which might too probably frustrate all efforts and mortify all expectations. The land was the broad basis on which this great structure was to be founded; and while the title to, and possession of, that land was insecure, this foundation was no better than a shaking bog. In some districts in the west of Ireland, nine-tenths of the population were without means of living in winter. The expectation was, that a poor-law would force the landowners to employ the people, in order to escape so enormous a charge as the poor-rate. Landowners elsewhere, whose past and future were ascertained and secure, might venture upon such a work, in the strength of unquestionable possession; but not so men who had grown up in the recklessness of insecurity, and to whom the future was merely a scene of chance. It was fearful enough that the proportion of paupers to the rest of society was twice as large as in England, while the pauper-maintenance fund was, in proportion, little more than one-third; and, when to this grave fact is added the consideration of the insecurity of the landed property itself, which is the basis of the whole, the wisest men, and most philosophical economists, may be excused for doubting whether the English poor-law would work in Ireland.

When the board of commissioners of inquiry recommended, in their report of 1836, a legal charity for the support of the sick and infirm, and for the promotion of emigration, the British Parliament and statesmen were not disposed to agree to the suggestion. To take off the weight of the able-bodied from the fund of voluntary charity was the first object; and, while the land was so badly tilled, it might prove no kindness to Ireland to remove her strong men to the colonies,—if even arrangements for the purpose could have been, at that time, made. It was determined by the ministers to send Mr. Nicholls, one of the poor-law commissioners, to Ireland, as the man fitted above all others to view the state of Irish society with the eye of science

as well as of compassion. Mr. Nicholls's commission bore date the 22d of August, 1836; and, after an inquiry of little more than six weeks, he prepared a very able report, which favored the introduction of the English poor-law into Ireland. It is well known that inquiry is immeasurably facilitated by such science and practical habits as Mr. Nicholls carried with him; and less objection was made to his report, on account of the haste with which it was produced, than might have been expected. But it is also understood how partial and technical may be the observation and inferences of a man so devoted to a great and successful enterprise as Mr. Nicholls was to the administration of the reformed poor-law in England; and it was a charge of the day against his report, that it showed him to have carried his conclusions with him, ready for use if he found them applicable, and that his observation amounted to not much more than seeing what he was looking for. His report, able as it would have been on an abstract case, able as it was on a partial case, was felt not to make sufficient allowance for so much of the peculiarity of the Irish character as depends on religious faith and guidance, nor to appreciate the haphazard character of the proprietorship of Irish estates. His view is derivable from one paragraph of his report:¹ "Ireland is now suffering under a circle of evils, producing and reproducing each other: want of capital produces want of employment; want of employment, turbulence and misery; turbulence and misery, insecurity; insecurity prevents the introduction and accumulation of capital; and so on. Until this circle is broken, the evils must continue, and probably augment." The largest omission here is of the notification that the insecurity is owing to other causes than those specified. The unhinging of society, which results from a long course of precarious holding of land, is of a kind not to be rectified by a poor-law, which proceeds on the supposition that the landlords are the secure owners of the soil, and therefore able, as well as liable, to support its burdens. Considering the habit of mendicancy in the country, begging was no test of destitution; and the workhouse-test was recommended to be strictly enforced. On a calculation that from eighty to a hundred workhouses would supply the requisite accommodation, the expense was estimated at from 700,000*l.* to 800,000*l.*² If this amount were advanced as a loan from the imperial treasury, it might be repaid in annual instalments of five per cent. from the rates, with the interest, without any greater burden to the landlords and occupiers than was now imposed by the voluntary charity which came mainly out of their pockets at last. The payment of rates was proposed to be divided equally between the landlord and the occupier, by which it was

¹ Hansard, xxxvi. p. 465.² Hansard, xxxvi. p. 473.

believed and hoped that the landlord would find his burden heavier, and the occupier lighter than hitherto. The new right of supervision over its members, which would arise in society by the establishment of a right to maintenance, was to be first manifested in the appointment of a warden or head-borough, who would keep watch against the increase of destitution through fault, and the spread of mendicancy. Precautions were to be taken against a preponderance of magistrates at the boards of guardians; and no clergyman, of any denomination, was to be concerned in poor-law administration during the prevalence of religious rancor in the country. It was thought best that the English board of commissioners should extend their administration to Ireland, rather than that a separate board should be established in Dublin; that the evils of inexperience and party suspicion might be avoided, and this new link in the union of England and Ireland be made as complete and sound as possible.

The royal speech of 1837 recommended to Parliament, in regard to Ireland, the consideration of "the difficult but pressing question of establishing some legal provision for the poor;" and, on the 13th of February, Lord J. Russell brought forward the Irish Poor-law Bill.¹ It was founded on Mr. Nicholls's report; and it was sustained, as very few measures of consequence are, in the House of Commons. Sir R. Peel and Lord Stanley supported it in its general provisions, and scarcely any one was found to object to it as a whole. It was proceeding favorably through committee when the death of the King deferred its passage for another session. By that time, some change of opinion had taken place, and much more opposition than before was offered by many persons besides Mr. O'Connell. Some had fears about the patronage of the board, in a country so sensitive and on the watch for injury as Ireland now was. Some desired a voluntary assessment by the clergy, for purposes of out-door relief, in addition to the provisions of the Act. And some brought forward their estimates of the population and of the rental, and of the proportion of these in certain districts; and, disbelieving that voluntary charity would cease, showed plainly, as they thought, that Ireland could not support a poor-law of this nature. The minorities were, however, small. Mr. O'Connell's question, "Whether English gentlemen would force on the country a measure which the people rejected?" was answered by a majority of 175 in favor of the Bill. In the Lords, the opposition was strong, — in speeches, at least, if not in votes.² With people outside, this told rather in favor of the measure than against it, as it seemed to show dread of increased burdens by the landlords. Besides the Londonderrys, Rodens, and Lyndhursts, whose opposition had been ex-

¹ Hansard, xxxvi. p. 4.

² Hansard, xlii. p. 715.

pected, there were Lords Fitzwilliam, Clanricarde, and Brougham, who declared their expectations of entire failure in the working of the Bill. The ministerial majorities were, however, large; and the Bill became law in July, 1838.¹

In August, the commission met, and appointed Mr. Nicholls to carry out the Act in Ireland. He went to Dublin, with sufficient assistance for beginning his arduous work. By the 9th of October, the assistant-commissioners had returned from their circuits in the provinces, and were joined by more assistants from England. They went into deliberation, and arranged their system in all its details. By the 25th of March following, twenty-two unions were declared; and, in eighteen of these, guardians were appointed.² Preparations for others were in great forwardness; and something more important still was effected. By the spread of the information furnished by the commissioners, much of the local unpopularity of the measure was converted into support; and where support was not given, there was usually acquiescence.

In the course of the next year, 127 unions were de-
clared, and only three remained to be formed. Four-^{Its early operations.}
teen workhouses were already opened for the reception of paupers; and the commissioners declared their confidence that the great scheme would work well for the redemption of Ireland. The reception of it by the beggars was curious, as might have been expected by those acquainted with Irish mendicancy in its prosperous days, when it was not, as now, the outward sign of insufferable misery, but rather bore a gay and convivial character.³ One beggar proudly told a commissioner that he would have little business but for the like of them;⁴ another, unwilling to surrender a poor idiot to legal charity, and fearing to be "lonesome without him," though finding him "mighty teasing," thought it a good thing to be an idiot, to enjoy the roving freedom of the class;⁵ another, who hated the "new jail," as she persisted in calling the union-house, found her business of mendicancy destroyed by the new agency,—would have gone into the house if she could have enjoyed there her tea and whiskey and tobacco; but, as she could not, took upon her to despise the house, and declared that she would work rather than enter it. The great consolation of this class was in finding "the hard man" compelled to contribute to the support of the poor; while they felt grief and shame at what they considered the demoralization of the charitable, who now began to inquire into the case of mendicants, and ask why they did not go into the house. There was a perceptible diminution in the crowds of beggars on the roads and in the villages; and in the towns the avowal was made, that the workhouses had

¹ Hansard, xlix. p. 28.

³ Hall's Ireland, p. i. 7.

² Annual Register, 1839, p. 300.

⁴ ii. p. 23.

⁵ iii. p. 352.

weeded them of very destitute cases.¹ When the "starving seasons" came round, — the interval between the complete consumption of one potato-crop and the harvest of another, — it was evident that more work had been done, and more providence exercised. The early operation of the Irish poor-law was pronounced to be decidedly successful. But it was too soon yet for the warmest advocates of the measure to pledge themselves that it would work the redemption of Ireland.

The immediate consequence of the debates on the virtues or vices of the Whig Administration of Ireland was the resignation of Lord Normanby on the first convenient occasion, — in the spring of 1839, when he became colonial secretary for a few weeks, and then went to the home department. His policy was continued by his coadjutors, and by Lord Ebrington (soon after Earl Fortescue), who succeeded him in the Viceroyalty. His retreat from Ireland did not pacify the opposition. In the session of 1839, the attacks on his government were renewed in both Houses of Parliament. In the Commons, Lord J. Russell met them by moving a resolution, on the 15th of April, that it was expedient to adhere to the principles of government which had been of great recent benefit to Ireland.² Sir R. Peel moved antagonist resolutions, that it was inexpedient so to pronounce while the Lords' committee of inquiry was still engaged upon its work. These last resolutions were voted down by a majority of 22. In the Upper House, Lord Brougham moved, on the 6th of August, and triumphantly carried, a set of resolutions, condemnatory of the Normanby policy, — particularly as regarded the administration of justice and the extension of mercy. The ministers were left in a minority of 34, in a House of 138.³

The opinion of the country, however, sustained the Irish Administration; at least, in its general principles. The prevalent impression, throughout the nation, was, at the time, that the country had never before been so well governed; and there were many who believed that the redemption of Ireland had at length been entered upon. If this has been disproved by the lights of painful experience, — if it now appears that the deep underlying mischief was unrecognized as a fatal obstruction, — the Whig Administration of Ireland may nevertheless have been an inestimable boon. It is the way with human affairs, that enterprises often fail of their express aims, but never of producing important collateral effects. The Normanby Administration did not redeem Ireland; but it proved before the eyes of all men a truth which must be understood before Ireland can be redeemed. It proved that no political gov-

Resignation
of Lord
Normanby.

Whig Gov-
ernment of
Ireland.

¹ iii. p. 352.

² Hansard, xlvii. p. 4.

³ Hansard, xlix. p. 1381.

ernment — the justest, the wisest, the most considerate — can rectify evils which are social, and not primarily political. The friendly rulers of Ireland, between the years 1835 and 1840, were not to have the privilege of redeeming her: but they did much to prepare the way; and they removed a great obstruction in extinguishing all just complaint of English misgovernment. Many other obstructions remained which rendered the work of effectual renovation impossible till a higher power than lies in human hands had cleared the way in a manner which it makes the stoutest heart tremble merely to contemplate. It is because this has happened, — because the wide sweep of misery has left it clear that the maladies of Ireland are social, and not political, — because the great underlying mischief has been heaved up to the surface by the convulsion, — because every one now sees what must be done before Ireland can be redeemed, — that we may speak of the hopefulness and cheerful composure with which the spirit of history may review the scenes and struggles of the past. The work now lies open; and the national gaze is beginning to contemplate it. A great work never waits long for the workman; and a greater work than this never presented itself to the human heart and hand. In an advanced age of the world, — in the day of high civilization, — here is a nation, full of noble qualities, however corrupted, to be taught how to live, — taught from the beginning; led up from a condition of passionate and suffering immaturity into the strength of self-disciplined, industrious, healthful, and prosperous manhood. If it be true that a great work never waits long for the workman, the day of the redemption of Ireland cannot be far off. When it comes, the nation will not altogether forget “the things that are behind,” in “pressing forwards to those that are before.” It will not forget that the experiment of a strenuous administration of justice and mercy was once tried; and that it afforded the needed proof that any political administration was a means too small for the redemption of Ireland.

CHAPTER VII.

DURING the political changes and struggles of the period under review, few may have perceived the close connection, which is now clear to us, between the disturbed state of the Church and the transitional character of the State. The difficulties that successive governments had in dealing with the religious bodies of the empire, appeared to many a mere coincidence with the death-struggles of parties, and not, as they truly were, another aspect of the same conflict. The ecclesiastical disturbance visible at once in England, Ireland, and Scotland, was as inevitable a sign of the times as the passage of the Reform Bill, or municipal renovation. It was a misfortune to all parties concerned, that the rulers of the State—too ill-prepared for action on the subjects most prominent in their own eyes—were absolutely incapable of intelligent government on ecclesiastical affairs. Their want of knowledge, their inability to comprehend or apply the principles concerned in the ecclesiastical disturbances of the time, were clear enough in the cases which have been already before us; but the complete exhibition of their incapacity took place in reference to the Church of Scotland.

As a preparation for the great scene of the disruption of the Church of Scotland, which will come before us in the final period of this history, we must look into the transactions of Lord Melbourne's government with that Church. We shall see how unaware the ministers were of what they had to do, and what they were doing; how little they understood the true importance and real bearings of the case. They took no warning by the refusal of the English Tractarians to acknowledge the control of the government in church matters; they took no warning from the united cry of the High Churchmen and Dissenters for a dissolution of the union between Church and State. As Lord Grey had stared with amazement at the Nottingham deputation, so now Lord Melbourne scarcely took pains to observe whether it was the Church or the Dissenters in Scotland who wanted more accommodation and instruction; and neither of these ministers, and no one of the coadjutors of either, seems to have had the remotest idea of its being his business to understand and decide and act

on a question as important as any that had risen up since the Reformation. And the English public knew and felt no more than their rulers. They did not recognize the struggle that now set in, north of the Tweed, as one which will be conspicuous in all future histories of the progress of opinion, — which now means nothing less than the history of human liberties. Even now the greater number of readers and listeners turn away at the first mention of the Scotch Church, in hopelessness of understanding the controversy, or caring about the parties engaged in it. Those who have, from any cause, been interested in the case, believe that its principal features may be clearly and rapidly sketched. At all events, the attempt must be made in a history of the period.

The Scotch Church appears to be the best in which to contemplate the rise and progress of the conflict between the principles of the connection or disconnection of religion with the State, because it has ever been peculiarly hard to Scotch Churchmen to admit the idea of dissent, and to undergo the process of severance from the Establishment. The Scotch Church was designed to be a spiritual republic, whose four judicatories, rising one above the other in gradations of power and authority, were still all elective. The session, the presbytery, the synod, the General Assembly, were all of a representative character, and were assumed to be chosen by the popular voice. This popular election was for a very short time, if ever, a truth; and the same may be said of the unity of faith presumed to be secured by the Establishment. While the elders and landed proprietors were in fact managing the appointments to office in the Church, many pastors were preaching doctrines which would not bear a comparison with the standards of the Establishment. The General Assembly wished for quiet, — dealt gently with heresies, — and would have been pleased to hear nothing of that great question of patronage which was, in little more than a hundred years, to explode the Church as a national Establishment. But the people found themselves under a despotism, from the unresisted nomination of the clergy by the patrons. The clergy nominated the elders; and the flocks had really no part whatever in the spiritual republic, where all were declared to be members of one body. The Assembly would not hear of a word of discontent, even from their own members; so the natural consequence followed, — the discontented took other measures to make themselves heard. One of them, the courageous Erskine, preached out the state of things from the pulpit, — was censured, first by the local synod, and then by the General Assembly, — offered a remonstrance, and was expelled from his pulpit, as were three other clergymen, who had supported his remon-

strance. In a century after, these four ministers had become four hundred. But they and their flocks were not Dissenters. They were compelled to separate from the organization of the Establishment; but they held all its principles, — claimed the honor of being the real Church-party in the case, and imitated the proceedings of the Establishment wherever they possibly could, without falling into its corruptions. In our own time, these claims have been allowed; and the Secession has been declared eminently conservative of the veritable Church of Scotland.

Another body of seceders, who were driven out also by tyranny, were equally far from being Dissenters. When a patron nominated for minister a man unacceptable to the great body of the congregation, the presbytery refused to ordain him. This happened so often as to be embarrassing to the General Assembly. The Assembly appointed the celebrated "Galloping Committees," as they were nicknamed; committees who went about doing the work which the presbyteries refused. Fired by the ridicule cast upon these committees, and by the taunt that the highest power could not control the presbyteries, the Assembly determined to try its hand at coercion. The Assembly enjoined obedience; a member of a presbytery, Mr. Gillespie, evaded it: he was deposed; and he gathered together, outside the walls of the church from which he was driven, a body of men opposed to the existing despotism in the appointment of ministers, and, after 100 years, was recorded as the founder of 120 congregations, constituting the Relief body, as it was called, — a body claiming relief from the despotism of patronage. These men also were thus not Dissenters. They had no fault to find with the Church,

but only with the perversion of one of her arrangements. At the end of a century, however, from the secession of 1734, the two bodies were called by others, and called themselves, Dissenters; their ministers having, for the most part, adopted the voluntary principle. The Establishment at this time had between 1100 and 1200 churches; a clergy of whom the moderator of the Assembly at that date said that the whole were of Tory politics, except about six: and for supporters, it had the great body of the affluent and powerful throughout Scotland.¹ The Dissenters had 700 churches, a clergy of liberal political opinions, and for supporters a great body of the laboring and some of the middle classes of society in Scotland. When Scotch borough-reform removed the oppressions under which this great body had lain, and opened to them a career of civil equality with the Church and Tory party, they bestirred themselves to extend their principles and increase their numbers; and the newspapers of the time tell of the forma-

¹ London and Westminster Review, April, 1833, p. 113.

tion of many associations for the promotion and support of voluntaryism in religion.

Thus was the ground of controversy wholly changed. The Secession and Relief bodies had complained of tyranny within the pale of the Church. Now, become Dissenters, they pronounced against the union of the Church and the State. The Church had once ejected discontented members from her own household. Now she felt called upon to wage war with a vast body of Dissenters; and the time was coming when she must sustain such another secession as must reduce her to a state of forlorn inferiority which she could not at present conceive of.

What did she do while the Dissenters were associating for the promotion of the voluntary principle? There was no time to lose; for a petition was sent up to Parliament, ^{Resort to church extension.} in 1837, in favor of a total separation of Church and State, signed in Glasgow by 41,000 people. The Church resolved on church extension, and that as much of the plan as bore on its opposition to the Dissenters should be kept in its own hands. It was necessary to request and obtain the assistance of the State, or a troublesome reference might hereafter be made to the sufficiency of voluntary effort on the present occasion; yet, if the matter were left to government, new churches would be built in far-away places, in country districts yet unprovided, and last of all, or never, in streets of towns where Dissenters' chapels existed already; whereas it was the very thing wanted to plant a church beside every chapel, in order to put down dissent. Dr. Chalmers avowed that his demand should not stop short of a church for every 1000 inhabitants, sooner or later; and he did not promise to stop short of a church for every 700. On this estimate, and by virtue of ignoring dissenting chapels altogether, and reckoning the Dissenters among the inhabitants destitute of religious guidance, a strong case of spiritual destitution was made out, while nothing more was asked of government than to endow the churches which the Establishment was willing to build. The consequence of the demand was, that the government was at first favorable, partly from ignorance of the state of the case, and partly through dread of the evident extension of the doctrine of voluntaryism; the Dissenters quitted that question for a time, to unite their forces against the imposition of burdens for a church which they disapproved; and the Church grew prouder than ever in the prospect of success. Her own subscriptions for new churches, subscriptions paid in by all manner of members, — from the purely benevolent who desired the spiritual benefit of the poor and forsaken, to the haughtiest who could not tolerate the Dissenters, — in two years amounted to upwards of 200,000¹.

¹ Hansard, xlii. p. 151.

The successive ministries of Sir R. Peel and Lord Melbourne saw nothing in the application, till the excitement they caused all over Scotland told them to the contrary, but a proposal to provide religious guidance for the destitute; an object which naturally appeared to them unquestionable. In the King's speech prepared by the Peel Cabinet, in February, 1835, we find this paragraph: "I feel it also incumbent upon me to call your earnest attention to the condition of the Church of Scotland, and to the means by which it may be enabled to increase the opportunities of religious worship for the poorer classes of society in that part of the United Kingdom."¹ For two years before this, Lords Melbourne and Brougham, then lord chancellor, had given deputations from Scotland to understand that they were favorable to the object of the Church; no question had been raised in the debate on the address in answer to the royal speech; and the Dissenters found it necessary to bestir themselves to make known the opinion of a vast proportion of Scotchmen that such a grant was needless and dangerous. By the month of May, the Melbourne Ministry had learned that the question involved more than people in London had supposed; the Lord Advocate of Scotland moved for a commission of inquiry into the need; and, on the 1st of July, Lord J. Russell appended a proposal to inquire what funds might exist in connection with the Church of Scotland which might be rendered available, so as to obviate a donation from the public purse for objects which a large body of the contributors to the public purse conscientiously disapproved.² In the proposal of a commission Sir R. Peel acquiesced, on the ground that the session was too far advanced for a parliamentary committee to effect any thing that year.

The commission was sent forth to its work without delay; and great was the clamor about its constitution. All its members but one were Churchmen; and that one was as obnoxious to the Church-party as the others were to the Dissenters. The high officials of the Church doubted the fealty of some of the Church members in the commission; and, on the last day of July, the Assembly, by their committee, addressed a remonstrance to the government on the constitution of the commission. No answer was returned; and, on the 13th of August, 90 out of 93 members of the Assembly, met for the purpose, renewed the remonstrance. When questioned in the House of Lords, Lord Melbourne answered, with his wonted speculative optimism, that a commission which pleased nobody must be a very good one, in times when party-spirit ran high; and that it was a fine thing for men of extreme opinions, like one of the commissioners, who had written a book against Establishments, to be put

¹ Hansard, xxvi. p. 67.

² Hansard, xxix. p. 138.

upon such work as this, as he was pretty sure of growing wiser, and learning to take more moderate views; and then the vigorous talents which such men ordinarily possess would come into action for the public service.¹ The deepest offence to the Church was — after the proposal to inquire at all — the direction to the commissioners to inquire into the amount of “unexhausted teinds;” that is, of tithes possessed by land-owners over and above the amount actually expended in their respective neighborhoods for the support of the Church.² In 1707, it had been settled, after much controversy, that the officials who administered church affairs might enlarge stipends, but not erect or endow any new parish without the consent of three-fourths, in value, of the landowners. This arrangement was seen at the time to be so far questionable as to cause a provision to be made that Parliament might alter it at pleasure. It was now reasonable to inquire into the working of this arrangement, if there really was a deficiency of church accommodation throughout the country. But a cry about the intended spoliation of private property was made; a cry so loud as to induce Lord J. Russell to publish, in a letter to the head commissioner, Lord Minto, a disclaimer, in the form of an instruction, not to give occasion for any charge of meddling with private property.³ Still, the unexhausted teinds had been regarded since 1707, and longer, as private property guaranteed by an express law: the holders foresaw the proposal to repeal the act of 1707, and exclaimed against the devouring rapacity of the Church: the Dissenters protested loudly against any further endowments from the State, under any pretence whatever; and denied, in this case, any pretence of necessity at all: the Churchmen were offended that Parliament had not made them a grant at once, without dispute; and they protested against all inquiry into the workings of their church organization, and the amount of their funds. There was yet another cause of offence. The class of tithes called bishops’ teinds must be dealt with separately. They were appropriated by the crown at the Reformation, bestowed on the bishops while Episcopacy existed in Scotland, and resumed by the Crown on its abolition. When stipends fell short, from the parochial teinds being exhausted, the deficiency was made up from the bishops’ teinds; but in no other way had the Church of Scotland any claim upon that fund. It had now become the property of Parliament, together with the other patrimonial property of the Crown surrendered by William IV.; and the general public, as well as the Scotch Dissenters, protested against any appropriation of this national fund to pur-

Teinds.

Bishops’
teinds.

¹ Hansard, xxx. pp. 1078, 1079.

² London and Westminster Review, April, 1838, p. 110.

³ Annual Register, 1835, p. 321.

poses of church extension in Scotland,—even before it was ascertained whether such extension was needed.¹ Thus, the commission was as unpopular on every hand as any commission could well be.

In his official letter, Lord John Russell expressed a hope that the greater part of the business would be completed within six months,—that is, in readiness for the session of 1836; but this was not possible. In 1837 and 1838, three reports were before the government,—on the religious instruction provided for Edinburgh and for Glasgow, and on teinds. They relate that Dissenters were more numerous than Church members in Edinburgh and Glasgow,—and especially the most earnest and steadfast class, the communicants; that the less-opulent Dissenters had provided much larger accommodation than the more opulent Establishment; that the church accommodation in Edinburgh exceeded the legal standard; that it fell short of that standard in Glasgow, but still went far beyond the existing need, as there were, as in Edinburgh, 20,000 unlet seats,—for the most part of the cheapest order. As for the teinds, some of the unexhausted ones were held by landowners who were Dissenters; and it must require great consideration before these could be taken from the holders for purposes of church extension. As for the amount, it fell but little below the sum of the actual stipends; and it was evidently a very serious matter to think of nearly doubling the revenues of the Church by taking funds out of the hands of private holders, some being Dissenters, to whom they had descended as property guaranteed by law for more than a century.

When the excitement caused by this inquiry was at the height, the elections of 1837 occurred. The Church party, animated by the clergy, strained every nerve to drive out the ministerial candidates, in hope of giving a finishing blow to the weak and unpopular Whig government, and bringing in men who would give them church extension and a triumph over the Dissenters. The Dissenters strove as earnestly on the other side; not from any call of trust and gratitude for what the Whig government had done, but in the hope that their timely aid now, in conjunction with the information of the report,—so strongly in their favor,—would procure serious attention to their case. But for the Dissenters, the Whig candidates would have been excluded from all the principal places in Scotland. It was hoped now that the prodigious excitement manifested during the elections would give the ministers some hint of the importance of the next move they might make. The evidence was before their eyes that the Scotch Church was a failure

Reports of
Commission-
ers.

Election
struggles.

Impotence of
the Church.

¹ Hansard, xlii. p. 119.

in its character of a missionary church, and therefore not entitled on that ground to aid from the community generally, or at the expense of the Dissenters, who were doing her missionary work without aid from any quarter. The worst district in Edinburgh had, at that date, six times as many ministers as the average of Scotch towns; and yet, out of a population of 25,000, only 1070 church-seats were let to the inhabitants of the district.¹ The report of the city mission also disclosed appalling facts of the vice and wretchedness of whole districts where the Church was a mere name, and the whole work was left to the zeal and charity of voluntaries. Yet, in the face of these facts, — in full view of the extraordinary excitement which pervaded all Scotland, — the vast public meetings, the gatherings of synods and societies for the protection of religious liberty, — in the full hearing of warnings from all England and from Ireland of the serious consequences of a government pledging itself to church extension at a period when the final struggle of our Established Churches for existence had manifestly begun, — in the midst of circumstances as serious as these, Lord J. Russell confirmed the agitating rumor which had been abroad since the elections, that the government was going to pledge itself to church extension in Scotland. Subsequent events proved — ^{Government favors Church extension.} what, indeed, few ever doubted — that the ministers did not know what they were doing. The universal excitement on ecclesiastical subjects was inexplicable to them. Their training and position did not enable them to enter into the importance of the question of Church Establishments to the great middle class in both England and Scotland, who understand the principle of it perhaps better than any other which ever comes before the government. The ministers did not see that a second Reformation might be the consequence of even a single ministerial act at such a juncture; and so they went intrepidly on, plunging into a matter which they did not understand, — to the amazement of men on both sides in the quarrel. Such inability of statesmen to enter fully into religious questions, while not surprising, is a strong argument on the side of the opponents of the union of Church and State; and it was so used, at this date, by the Tractarians on the one hand, and the Dissenters on the other; and there was nothing in the condition of any of the three Establishments to shame the plea. In the English Church, the prelates, the clergy generally, and the popular body in the Church, were parting asunder, with mutual reproaches of tendency to schism and unseemly disturbance. The dreadful position and reputation of the Protestant Church in Ireland was a subject so familiar as to have become wearisome; and now the Scotch

¹ Scotsman, October, 1836.

Church had challenged her adversaries to a conflict which was to end in her hopeless humiliation. Yet the ministers remained unconscious of the gravity of the occasion. Lord Melbourne and Lord J. Russell said irreconcilable things on the same night in the two Houses; and when they had compared notes, and come to an agreement what to state, it was that they proposed to extend the endowments of the Scotch Church.¹ For this object, they intended to repeal the Act of 1707, with regard to the unexhausted parochial teinds, permitting certain authorities to divide the parishes, and give the teinds to church purposes. At the same time, large parishes in the Highlands or elsewhere were to be endowed, from the bishops' teinds or some other dues of the Crown. These teinds were now, as has been explained, national property, at the disposal of Parliament. On the avowal of the ministerial intention of giving them to the Scotch Church, a general cry arose,—a question of where government would stop. If such aid was given to a Church which had proved a failure wherever its work should have been most vigorous, and whose need of aid was denied by a great majority of its own countrymen, what should not be done for England, whose metropolis exhibited more spiritual destitution than all Scotland together? Every one knew that if equal measure were dealt to the English Church, or any proposal of the kind mentioned, the destruction of the Church was inevitable.

There was not much in the aspect of Parliament to gratify such Scotchmen as might be present at debates on the great subject. When Lord Aberdeen brought the matter forward, on the 30th of March, 1838, we find one speaker after another referring to the extreme thinness of the House; and Lord Aberdeen actually declaring himself wholly unable to comprehend what the excitement of the Scotch Dissenters was about. They were not divided from the Church by any disagreement in doctrine, but only by a hair-breadth, as it were, about matters of arrangement, in which he could not see that this question was concerned.² “He assured their lordships, that not only had he never known any thing like the interest which existed on this subject, but he verily believed that never had any question of domestic policy so much agitated the people of Scotland since the union of the two kingdoms.” Lord Aberdeen did not see the meaning of the movement, any more than the ministers. The debate was a melancholy and humbling one,—a natural consequence of the hesitating mind and tentative action which the Ministry had manifested on this most serious subject. Lord Aberdeen's motion was for certain returns relative to the Church of Scotland. He stated the expensiveness of

Indifference
of Parli-
ament.

¹ Hansard, xli. pp. 693, 702.

² Hansard, xlii. p. 112.

the commission, assumed the duty of the government to afford supplies, through Church Establishments, to spiritual destitution, wherever it was pointed out; protested against the appropriations announced by the government, and declared them to be spoliations; and, finally, taxed Lord Melbourne with breach of faith in first inducing the Church to build places of worship on a pledge that government would endow them, and then refusing such endowment. Lord Melbourne's reply was indignant: "I deny, in the strongest manner, in the most decisive terms, and in the most explicit language in which one gentleman can speak to another, that I ever entered into such an undertaking."¹ And Lord Melbourne was clearly right. The churches were built or intended before any commission was issued; and the commission was one of inquiry into facts. But it was also clear that the ministers had entered rashly upon a course which pledged them to the principles of church extension; and this, in a case of eminently dubious claims; and that Lord Melbourne's speech of this night showed a considerable change and enlargement of view, which came too late.

This question here merged into the yet more essential one which, in a few years, determined the fate of the Scotch Church,—the question of patronage. When we arrive at the date of that story, more will be seen of the disastrous effects of the unconsciousness of statesmen of the vital importance of Church conflicts, when the principles of religious liberty are in question. If the case is intricate,—as in this instance of the patronage question,—it may be said that statesmen cannot be expected to enter into all its niceties. If so, it is a misfortune that the determination rests with them; for it is precisely upon the niceties of a question of principle that the decision ought to depend. Meantime, as early as June, 1835, Lord J. Russell committed a grave mistake which showed how little he understood of what was involved in the question of patronage.

In May, the landowners of East Kilbride agreed to petition government to allow a trial of candidates for their ^{Ignorance of} pulpit. On the 14th, and again on the 21st, Lord J. ^{ministers.} Russell promised to consult the wishes of the petitioners. On the 6th of June, it appeared that the candidates were six; and this, as was immediately notified to Lord J. Russell, called for an interval of six Sundays before the choice was made. But, on the 16th, the appointment of one of the candidates was gazetted; and it had been previously known in Glasgow. The remark of the reforming journal which relates the fact is: "Lord John, like most Englishmen, is ignorant of the peculiar position of the Scottish Church, and the feelings of Scotchmen towards

¹ Hansard, xlii. p. 151.

it.”¹ The time was, however, approaching when the English, if they did not comprehend the Church questions of Scotland, were impressively instructed as to the feelings of Scotchmen towards it.

¹ Glasgow Argus, June, 1885.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE great questions whose history has been detailed left little leisure to Parliament for debates on subjects of more ordinary interest. The session of 1835 was declared at its close to be ingloriously remarkable for the small amount of business transacted; and, during the next two, the topics which are usually brought forward every year, in the expectation that they will be amply debated, were either omitted, or dismissed with brief notice. The subject of agricultural distress is rarely absent from the records of any session; and we find it here, as usual. In May, 1835, the Marquis of Chandos moved for a repeal of the taxes which bore upon the agricultural interest.¹ Every one admitted the distress, — the low or fluctuating prices of produce, — the uncertainty of the farmer's gains while his expenses were fixed, and, under some heads, increased: but the majority of the House agreed with Sir R. Peel, who doubted whether the best way of assisting the farmer was by reducing direct taxation; and, unless this were certain, he thought it wrong to excite hopes which would probably be disappointed. The motion was therefore voted down by a large majority. At the beginning of the next session, the complaints continuing, Lord J. Russell moved for a committee of inquiry, declaring that the long-continued or permanent distress of any interest was a proper subject of investigation; but he guarded himself from being supposed to promise or to expect relief to the agriculturists from any thing that could be done or proposed through such a committee.² During its sitting, Parliament was relieved from the discussion of the subjects usually introduced as the causes of agricultural distress, — the currency, local burdens, and the corn-laws. Mr. Cayley had rest from the labor of showing how it was the Bill of 1819 which occasioned agricultural distress, and how all would be right if we resorted to "a silver standard, or conjoined standard of silver and gold."³ The House would not agree to this the year before; and now the committee would preclude its being brought

¹ Hansard, xxviii. p. 92.

³ Hansard, xxviii. p. 296

² Hansard, xxxi. p. 147.

forward again. The Marquis of Chandos would be spared his annual speech on the burdens on land; and the enemies of the corn-laws could not do better than trust the cause of free-trade to the evidence brought before the committee. The continued pressure of agricultural distress was a stronger argument in favor of a repeal of the corn-laws than any which could be uttered by the voice of any man; and it was certain to be corroborated by all the evidence which the committee could call for.

Result. The result was remarkable. The committee "ended in nothing," as the disappointed said; that is, it presented the evidence, without any report whatever. A report had been prepared; and it was discussed at a meeting of twenty-five of the committee, eighteen of whom called themselves emphatically the farmers' friends. These eighteen objected altogether to the report, as certain to injure the cause of the suffering party, and insisted upon its suppression. They could not have done better for the objects of the free-traders.¹ The reasons for their venturing thus to disappoint the expectations of the landed interest were looked for in the evidence, and easily found. The laborer was one part, and the largest, of the agricultural interest; and he was found to be in a state no worse than formerly, but considerably better than of late years.² The other two classes, less numerous, united, than that of the laborers, were shown to be victims, not of the pressure of local burdens, but of fluctuations in the price of produce, which kept the farmer in perpetual uncertainty about his profits, and the landowner about his rents. The report would have stated these results; but its suppression, and the publication of the evidence on which it was founded, answered every purpose equally well. Familiar and wearisome as the subject is, it becomes more, instead of less, necessary to record complaints of agricultural distress as every year brings us nearer to the great settlement of the principle of agricultural commerce, that it may be clear how that settlement was both occasioned and justified by the sufferings of the landed interest, who might, according to their own annual complaints, gain by a change of system, but could hardly lose.

The cry for the reduction of taxation was not on behalf of the agriculturists alone. Every year it was demanded; and every year the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that government was reducing taxation as fast as it could without needing the intervention of parliamentary committees, or other stimulus or assistance. In 1835, there was no surplus, though considerable evidence of prosperity. The great fires in London and Dublin, — the destruction of the Houses of Parliament, and injury to the Dublin custom-house, — occasioned

¹ Hansard, xxxv. pp. 382, 384.

² p. 385.

unforeseen expense; and there were other unexpected charges: but the aspect of affairs was favorable enough to justify the reduction or repeal of a few small taxes; namely, the duty on flint-glass, now reduced from 6*d.* to 2*d.* per lb.; the reduction of the duty on spirit-licenses, within a certain limit; and the repeal of the duty on awards in Ireland, whereby inducement might be offered to the poorer classes to settle their disputes in a cheaper manner than by going to law. It was found necessary to make an alteration in the tea-duty, as well as in that on spirit-licenses. Lord Althorp's methods rarely worked well; and in this case it was found necessary very soon to alter the tax on tea. Before the China trade was thrown open, there was a scale of *ad-valorem* tea-duties, charged according to the prices given at the sales at the India House. When teas might be sold in any shop, government fixed three rates of duty, corresponding with the qualities of teas, in the hope of thus subjecting the purchasers of low-priced teas to a low duty. Besides the temptation to fraud, and the infinite trouble sure to be caused by this arrangement, it was soon found that the qualities of teas are not often distinct and distinguishable enough to afford an unquestionable basis for separate taxation. Teas of different value paid the same duty, and teas of the same value paid a different duty; the custom-house officers had in their hands, not only an irksome task, but a greater power of oppression than any tax could justify. The House agreed to the proposal of government; and it was resolved that, from the 31st of July, 1836, the discriminatory duty should cease, and be succeeded by one of 2*s.* 1*d.* on all teas for home consumption.¹

In 1835, an effort was made by Mr. Bulwer to obtain a repeal of the stamp-duty on newspapers. The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not defend the tax, which he admitted to be bad in principle and policy; but he must satisfy himself with pledging his testimony against the tax, and wait for a further surplus before he could undertake to repeal it. This was received as a promise to repeal the duty the next year. Between two-thirds and three-fourths of the duty was in fact remitted the next year. The 4*d.* stamp with discount was exchanged for 1*d.* stamp without discount. The reason why the remission was not complete was that a postage-rate must in that case have been imposed; and it was thought more convenient to all parties to retain a small stamp-duty.² This was a remission of taxation truly honorable to government, and beneficial to the people. A vast quantity of trash was immediately driven out of the market, and its place supplied by good newspapers. The lowest order of readers will always

¹ Hansard, xxix. p. 488.² Hansard, xxxiii. p. 670.

prefer what is superior to what is inferior, in political and social literature, as in every thing else, if both are made equally attainable; and it presently appeared that unstamped newspapers, got up by adventurers in defiance of law,—however faulty the law might be,—had no chance with the least-informed class of readers in the presence of more intelligent journals, now legally made cheap.

The report of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was prosperous this year,—1836,—for the last time for several years; for, before the next session, the memorable seven years' distress of the manufacturing-classes had given tokens of approach which were not to be mistaken. In 1836, the surplus would have been two millions, but for the payments to the West-India planters. As it was, there was a surplus of 662,000*l.*, destined in the first place to the reduction of the paper-duties, which were pernicious in many

Paper-duty. ways, and especially as affording incitement and occasion to extensive frauds.¹ Writing-paper had been paying a duty of 25 per cent.; printing-paper, from 50 to 60 per cent.; and coarse paper, from 70 to 200 per cent. There was now to be a general duty of 1½*d.* per lb. on all sorts; and, as all paper paid duty, the secondary tax on stained paper was remitted altogether. Lord Althorp had repealed the duty on the insurance of farming-stock; and it was now proposed to extend the repeal to the insurance-duty on farm-buildings. Some smaller taxes went also, as it was anticipated that there would be a large increase in the consumption of paper, and in the spread of newspapers, so as to obviate any ultimate loss to the revenue from the repeal of their respective duties. In 1837, the surplus was less than 400,000*l.*;

Budget. and the Chancellor of the Exchequer could only declare his own disappointment to be as great as other people's,—show that his former reductions of duty had answered well,—declare that the present adversity was owing to the commercial panic which had lately prevailed,—and express his confident hope that the worst was past, and that he should have a more cheering story to tell next year.

Distress. There was something irritating in the constantly hopeful and satisfied tone of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom nothing could discourage or depress, so far as to make him evince, at any time, the solicitude which seemed naturally to belong to his position, in a season of adversity. His *poco-curanteism*, joined with Lord Melbourne's, was too much for the patience of the suffering people during the terrible winter of 1836 and 1837. The harvest had not been a very good one; and in America it was so much worse, that there was a large demand for wheat from England, exactly at the time when the

¹ Hansard, xxxiii. p. 671.

money relations of the two countries were in a fearful state. The potato-crop had failed at home; and, just when the cold of a severe winter was setting in, there was a complication of distresses which it might appal any Minister to face. By the extraordinary action of the American president, General Jackson, upon the banks, there was a drain for gold from every country that could send away; and the stock in the Bank of England was lower than at any time since the passing of the Bill of 1819, except during the worst of the crisis of 1825.¹ The prices of all articles but food were so low that manufactures seemed likely to stop for the winter; while, from the insufficient supply of food, and the drain from abroad for what there was, the price of corn and other provisions was rising from week to week. When the bank took fright, and "put on the screw," the dismay was extreme, and nothing better was looked for than such a winter as that of ten years before.

During the preceding prosperity, — during the three years of fine seasons, abundant harvests at home, and increased production of food in Ireland, — speculation had revived, and had shown itself especially in the direction of banking. Now the time had come for looking into the matter, — now, ^{Joint-stock banks.} when the Bank of England had restricted her issues, and made the pain or numbness of the operation felt through every nerve of the commercial and manufacturing body of the nation. In the first seven years from the institution of joint-stock banking, thirty-four joint-stock banks were established.² Nearly the same number rose up in the three following years, extending to the end of 1835. The average thus was, for the ten years, three new banks per annum. But, in 1836, there were forty-two new ones set up, with branches which increased the number to nearly 200. During that year, the issues of joint-stock banks had increased nearly a million and a half. The branches in connection with the joint-stock banks existing in 1836 ^{Extension.} were 670 in number; and the number of partners was upwards of 37,000.³ Of these banks, more than three-fourths issued their own notes; and those that issued the notes of the Bank of England, in exchange for facilities in the way of discounts, were bound not to send up less than a certain amount of bills for discount, so that the local issues were thus put by the bank out of its own power of control. During the three years of fine harvests, the price of wheat had fallen from 55s. 5d. to 36s.; the abundance of food more than compensated to the working-classes for the rising prices of other articles; and their condition was one of unusual prosperity. During the latter part

¹ Spectator, 1836, p. 1058.

³ Porter's Progress, &c., sec. iii. p. 221.

² Stamp-office Returns.

of this period, the Bank of England increased its issues by a million, and other banks — in England, Wales, and Ireland — by three millions; and speculation became almost as mad as it had been ten years before. It was not till April, 1836, that the bank began to contract its issues; and the drain of gold had already set in so as to induce the directors to raise the rate of interest on discount to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, in July, and 5 in August.¹ The joint-stock banks did not take the hint, as had been hoped, but actually increased their issues above 50 per cent. in the course of the year, during the greater part of which the bank had been striving to stop the drain of gold which had reduced the stock of bullion to five millions.² The panic which must come was foreseen by men of business through the summer. Its first manifestation was the failure of a great joint-stock bank in Ireland, — the Agricul-

Failures.

tural and Commercial; which, with its thirty branches, came to a stop in November. A general run upon joint-stock banks had begun; and, in the north of England, there seemed reason to fear a repetition of the miseries of 1826. To avoid this, and in fear for its own low stock of bullion, the Bank of England gave ample and rapid assistance; saving first the great Manchester Joint-stock Bank, — “the Northern and Central,” and its forty branches, — and in that, and by subsequent efforts, many others. An untoward accident presently afterwards increased the public distrust in the state of commercial affairs. When the Bank of England raised the rate of interest on discounts, and had to lend to money-dealers who employed the loans in the discount of goods-bills, there was much surprise at the quantity of American paper that came in, disclosing the existence of an unsound system of credits carried on by six houses in London and one in Liverpool, which made advances on American account to an amount of not less than fifteen or sixteen

American
credits.

millions at one time, while the means of meeting their liabilities did not altogether amount to so much as one-sixth of the whole. The bank directors sent orders to their agent at Liverpool to refuse the paper of certain American houses. By some strange indiscretion, the names of these firms got abroad. Though they fell into immediate discredit, these firms contrived to struggle on till the next March, when three of them, whose outstanding acceptances amounted to five millions and a half, suspended payment. The danger now was that other American houses must stop, whose liabilities, added to those just mentioned, would have amounted to nearly twelve millions. To avert so fatal a shock, the bank sustained the three great houses till they had considerably lessened the amount of their liabilities.

¹ Tooke's History of Prices, ii. pp. 300, 302.

² Annual Register, 1837, p. 173.

But such transactions did not confirm public confidence in England, and occasioned a further embarrassing re-action from America, where the consequence was nothing less than the knocking-up of all the banks which had escaped the operations of President Jackson.

Amidst such a state of affairs, it was not to be wondered at that renewed parliamentary inquiry into the principles and practice of banking was desired. A committee of inquiry into the operation of joint-stock banks had sat, with Mr. Clay as chairman, in the session of 1836, and had resolved at the close to present such evidence as had come before them, without declaring any doctrine or recommendation till the subject should have been prosecuted further. The royal speech of the 31st of January, 1837, emphatically recommended the subject to the earnest attention of the House of Commons; declaring that, while the best security against the mismanagement of banking must always be found in the integrity and ability of the managers, no legislative regulation should be omitted which can confirm the security.¹

On the 6th of February, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved for the renewal of the late committee; to which the majority of the House eagerly assented. In the course of the debate, there seemed to be an almost universal agreement to express confidence in joint-stock banks, to praise their management under late difficulties, and to blame the bank for various faults of conduct.² The committee, however, found occasion to recommend large alterations in the arrangements of joint-stock banks; and these were embodied in an Act which became law on the 17th of July, 1837.³ By this Act, shareholders became liable for only the amount of their shares; and there could no longer be an unrestricted nominal capital, or an imperfect registration of the names of shareholders.⁴ A further regulation was carried out in 1844, by an Act which may be referred to here as concluding the subject. By this Act, every new company is required to present a petition to the Queen in council, signed by at least seven of the shareholders, praying for a patent of institution, and offering all the necessary details of the persons, the capital, the method of management, the locality proposed, and so on.⁵ The petition is then examined by the Board of Trade, and certified to be in compliance with the law. The deed of partnership is superintended by the Board of Trade. An unauthorized partner can now no longer bind the rest of the partners to any act; but only an authorized director. Joint-stock banks have now the right of suing and

¹ Hansard, xxxvi. p. 3.² Hansard, xxxvi. p. 155.³ 1 Vic. c. 73.⁴ 7 and 8 Vic. c. 113.⁵ Polit. Dict. i. p. 276

being sued. The difficulties and dangers of banking are not removed by these acts; nor can be by any means whatever till the intricate subject of currency — which includes many others — is absolutely understood by a few, and comparatively well by all parties immediately concerned. Meantime, we see in the records of the time a melancholy picture of popular ignorance extending to high places, while the consequent misery spread down to the lowest. One member of parliament thought that a silver standard would set all right; another declared, in allusion to the cheerfulness of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that ministers were fiddling while the state was burning; that the distress of 1825-6 was not a millionth part of what existed at present; and that a paper-currency, regulated by the demand, was the only cure: one was for requiring incessant and minute returns from every banking establishment, for the sake of control by the Bank of England or the government; and another was opposed to all inquiry whatever till the “infant” joint-stock banks could show what they could do: some were for making the Bank of England the only bank of issue; others were for allowing no issues but by a national bank, which should be responsible to the Crown and to Parliament; and others, again, were for perfect free-trade in money. Amidst these differences, men might be advancing towards knowledge; and Parliament did something in improving the securities of joint-stock banks: but there was something melancholy and alarming in the sense and evidence of general ignorance which was pressed upon the thoughtful by the incidents of the time. It was within the period mentioned above, that a currency discussion took place at the Political-Economy Club, at which three Cabinet ministers attended as hearers, and where three or more chiefs of the science propounded their respective doctrines. The matter was gone into with all possible ability, earnestness, and temper; and no one complained of want of opportunity to state his doctrine fully. No one of these chiefs converted another; only one, if any, gave a general impression of being fully master of his subject; and no one could be declared to have settled the mind of any hearer. The three Cabinet ministers listened in earnest silence, and committed themselves to no opinion. It is probable that they thought, like other hearers, that the subject, certainly fathomable, is as yet as far from being fathomed as any on which society is under the fate of proceeding from day to day, without being able to pause for wisdom to choose a path which might guide her clear of some terrible abyss ahead, instead of straight into it. We now know, only too feelingly, that the monetary crisis of 1836-7 was not to be the last.

One of the most useful and beneficial acts of legislation of

this reign was that which gave the nation a registration of births, marriages, and deaths; and the year 1836 was that ^{National} which introduced it. In noting the year of its origin, ^{registration.} the mind is carried on to contemplate the spread of its consequences, which may indeed be fairly considered incalculable. The most obvious, though the lowest, consideration is the security of property given by the existence of an authentic and accessible record of the family events which govern the transmission of real property. Another consideration, deeply felt by a large section of the people, was the removal of a tacit disgrace and disability from the Dissenters; a disgrace and disability never designed, but growing out of the fact that whatever registration existed was ecclesiastical and not civil. Not births, but baptisms, were, up to this time, registered; no marriages but those which took place at the Church of the Establishment, from which Quakers and Jews were therefore excluded; no deaths but of persons who were buried by the clergy of the Establishment. Again, here was a means of exploration into the whole of society, which might answer many beneficent purposes, while it had nothing in it obtrusive or despotic. The numbers of the people would be known; their proportion to the means of education; their worldly condition, as indicated by the proportion of marriages; their sanitary condition, as indicated by the proportion of mortality, and the nature of the maladies which carried them off; and, finally, here would be, always at hand, a vast body of statistical facts, out of which social reforms might be constructed, according to the speculations of the most thoughtful, and perhaps beyond the dreams of the most imaginative. In old times, the registration, being exclusively ecclesiastical, was one of the duties appointed expressly to the clergyman, on his entrance into his function; but it was used for civil purposes, which caused it to be disliked, and consequently evaded, where possible. It was used for taxing purposes, as in the Act of 6 and 7 William III., c. 6, when duties were levied "on births, marriages, and burials, and upon bachelors and widowers, for the term of five years, for carrying on the war against France with vigor."¹ The most recent legislation upon the subject had chiefly provided for the security of the records,—ordaining that the books should be made of parchment or strong paper, and kept in dry and well-painted iron chests. No conception of the importance of such a measure as a complete civil registration of the life, death, and domestic condition of the whole people seems to have entered the mind of the nation till our own century; and that century will hereafter be regarded as honorable in which it was done.

¹ Polit. Dict. ii. p. 625.

The improvement in the marriage-law connected with this measure has been specified before. Sir R. Peel introduced the sound principle of rendering marriage a civil contract, only so far obligatory by law, because the civil contract is all that the state has to do with; and the religious celebration is a matter of private conscience altogether. From the time of the passage of this Act, the business lay, as far as the state was concerned, between the registrar and the parties intending to marry. The marriage might take place at the office of the superintendent-registrar, or at any church or chapel registered for the purpose, without publication of banns, and in virtue of the registrar's certificate that the provisions of the law had been complied with; the registrar being present, and the certificate being delivered to the officiating clergyman, or the registering officer in any dissenting chapel or synagogue. If the parties are married at the superintendent-registrar's office, that officer must be present, and another registrar and two witnesses; the hours and open doors must be the same as in other cases, and also the declarations as to the absence of legal impediment. In the place of the former publication of banns, there was now to be a sufficient previous residence and length of notice; the publication of banns being henceforth confined to the case of members of the Establishment.¹ By this act, the Dissenters obtained a relief which it will hereafter be astonishing that they could have waited for so long; and the state began to practise the virtuous prudence of making marriage as accessible as it at present knew how, and consonant to the principles and feelings of the conscientious of every way of thinking.

This marriage business occupied one of the two Bills brought forward by Lord John Russell on the 12th of February. The other provided for the registration of births and deaths. The guardians of the poor were to divide the parishes into districts which should be supplied with a sufficiency of registrars.² The occupiers of houses were encouraged to give notice, within a certain time, of every birth and death that happened therein, with such particulars as the officers were authorized to ask. A fee on registration must be paid, after the lapse of the shortest term specified, and a heavier fee after further delay. Births and deaths happening at sea were to be registered by the captain of the vessel. Those who gave information of deaths were encouraged to present a declaration of the cause of death, in the handwriting of the attendant medical man. The registers were to be transmitted to London, to be kept in a central office, where access might be had to them, on payment of a small fee. It may be seen at a glance what a

¹ Polit. Dict. ii. p. 323.

² Polit. Dict. ii. pp. 626-628.

broad ground for sanitary improvement was afforded by this measure; how immediately the prevalence of certain diseases in particular localities must be made apparent; and how easy it must become in time to ascertain the most important conditions of life and health from a body of facts so large and so unquestionable as is afforded by a general register.

In the first year, the number of deaths registered amounted almost exactly to that which Mr. Finlaison, the act-^{First operation.} uary, previously said it ought to be. The marriages registered were fewer than could have taken place; and the births, fewer still. The prejudices against the registration of births have been giving way ever since, and the returns are less unsatisfactory every year; but they are still defective, the births unregistered certainly amounting to some thousands every year. This is likely to be the last portion of the scheme which will work as it ought. By the end of 1838, the number of registrars amounted to about 2,200; nearly half of whom were officers in poor-law unions. Of these, above 400 registered marriages, as well as births and deaths; and 400 more registered marriages only. The superintendent-registrars were about 600.¹ The total expense was estimated by the ministers, when Lord John Russell introduced the measure, at about 80,000*l.* per annum; and surely he was right in thinking that the money could not be better spent. This great institution, as it may be called, was one result of the reform of the poor-law; and, if from it should arise a thoroughly effective scheme of sanitary administration, we may see in the new poor-law a cure for other than "the great political gangrene of England."

In the session of 1835, a Bill to abolish imprisonment for debt had passed the Commons, but had reached the Peers too late for any chance of becoming law that^{Imprisonment for debt.} year. In 1836, the Lord Chancellor introduced a similar measure on the 30th of June: but, before the middle of July, when the vote for the second reading was to be taken, the Duke of Wellington settled, for himself and the House, that it was too late to proceed with a matter of such importance; and, though the Premier thought there was plenty of time, the Bill was dropped.² Some success was now, at last, obtained by those who had, for several sessions, attempted to obtain the benefit of counsel for prisoners on trial for felony. Counsel for felons.³ Twice had a Bill to this effect passed the Commons, and been obstructed or dropped in the Lords: but now the criminal-law commissioners had unanimously recommended, that prisoners charged with felony should be allowed the advantage of counsel to address the jury in their defence; and the pro-

¹ Hansard, xxxi. p. 371.

² Hansard, xxxiv. p. 1063.

posal came before Parliament with a new sanction. The marvel of the case now is that there could have been any doubt about the matter; but there were still persons who were misled by the saying that the judge was the prisoner's counsel,—not considering how much there might be in the case which could never come to the knowledge of the judge. Lawyers of all politics said this; some knew cases where innocent men had been sacrificed for want of legal aid; and all seemed to approve the principle of the Bill, while a few, as Lord Lyndhurst, objected to certain of the details. In treason-trials, at one end of the scale of crime, and in trials for misdemeanor, at the other, prisoners had the benefit of counsel, but not in the intermediate range. No one among the Peers disputed the absurdity of this; and, in committee, only one amendment was made to which the Commons did not at once agree. But that amendment was of great consequence, and it seemed at one time likely to throw out the Bill for that year. The Bill gave the prisoner the last word. His counsel was to reply to the address for the prosecution, after the evidence was done with. Lord Abinger declared that he would oppose the Bill, if this was in all cases allowed.¹ The Lord Chancellor defended the provision, but was outvoted. The Commons were disturbed, and requested a conference: the Lords would not yield their amendments; and, sooner than lose the Bill altogether, Mr. Ewart, who brought it in, took what he could get, announcing that he should try for the rest another year.²

A new statute was passed this session which repealed the obligation to execute murderers the next day but one after conviction, unless the day should happen to be Sunday. The same discretion was now left as to the day of execution, as in other cases of capital conviction.³ The powers of coroners were enlarged, Coroners' powers. in the same session, by means of a provision for paying the expenses of medical witnesses, and enabling the coroner to call for additional medical evidence, when required.⁴

An interesting item in the business of Parliament, since the great fire, had been the consideration how to provide a New houses of Parliament. new house for the great council of the nation to meet and work in. On request from Parliament, a royal commission had been appointed in 1835, to receive plans by open competition for the rebuilding of the houses. Out of more than ninety plans, four had been selected for further examination; and to choose among these was the business of the renewed committee of 1836. A debate was raised by Mr. Hume as to whether the site should not be exchanged for a spot more open and elevated,—as, per-

¹ Hansard, xxxv. p. 184.

³ Hansard, xxxv. p. 745.

² Hansard, xxxv. p. 1325.

⁴ 6 and 7 Wm. IV., c. 89.

haps, St. James's Palace and Marlborough House ; but, besides that certain conveniences were connected with the old site, much property had been bought, and many houses pulled down, for the purpose of rebuilding on the same spot.

The opinion of the committees of both Houses, as to the choice of plan and architect, was made apparent in March by their proposal of an address to the King, to petition him to institute inquiries as to the probable expense of executing the plan of Mr. Barry. It was considered a great day for art in England when such a work as this was thrown open to competition. Here was no despotism of rank or fame in king or architect, to settle a matter in which the nation should have a share through its representatives ; but, while the tribunal was as good a one as could have been found to meet all the needs of the case, its nature was a sort of invitation to the people to look upon the enterprise as business of their own, and learn from it, as we all do from enterprises of our own. It was worth the inconvenience and loss from the fire to give the nation such an exercise in art and the love of it as the erection of the palace of Parliament. The cost has far exceeded expectation, and is still heavy ; and it has occurred during a long period of distress : but it is hard to say how the money could have been better spent than on an object so noble, so truly expedient, so plainly extending its benefits into a far future, as the erection of a building which will be to a future age what our old abbeys and cathedrals are to us now. Mr. Barry's plan appears to have put all others out of sight at once, — admirable as some of them were declared to be. One of its excellences was that there was a largeness and unity about its exterior plan which admitted of great modifications, according to circumstances and experience, of interior arrangements ; but this advantage was not regarded as a merit by disappointed competitors and their advocates, but rather as a ground of complaint about changes and improvements, and departure from original proposals. If it required the courage of a hero to offer such a plan to a body so notoriously utilitarian as the British House of Commons, it required further the patience of a saint to endure being "hunted and pursued" as Mr. Barry was from the moment of the preference of the committees being avowed, and with more or less intermission through succeeding years. But a man who works for ten thousand generations cannot expect perfect sympathy from the existing one. He ought to be satisfied with so much as enables him to do his work ; and Mr. Barry has had much more than this. He might be satisfied with looking forward to future centuries, when men of an advanced order of civilization will pass through his imposing corridors and pictured halls, and pause before his magnificent tower, and swell with admiration, without any

more dreaming of criticism than we do in pacing a cathedral aisle. The criticism appears to be of a more temporary character even than usual in this case; the most vehement being connected with the process of competition,—presently done with,—and much of the rest being about the proportions of unfinished work. All this will die away in a few years; and then the general appreciation of the achievement will begin. Meantime, the architect has been well sustained by admiration and sympathy.

The principle of competition is admitted also in regard to the sculpture and paintings to be deposited within. The present will be ever regarded as a memorable period for British sculptors and painters, as well as architects. They have been invited to open competition, so conducted as that every artist can show, before worthy judges, how far he is capable of conceiving and presenting the ideas and facts of the destiny and story of his nation. If there is genius among us, undeveloped, it will be brought out; and that which has already made itself known, cannot but be animated by such an incitement. We may hope to see, in the new Houses of Parliament, the mind of our time stamped for the contemplation of the future, in the form of a history of the past: and, if this is not done, it must be because we are not able to do it; for the opportunity lies open. Niches and pedestals are waiting for statues, and panels for paintings, and all our artists are invited to come and try who is most worthy to supply both. If there are men to do it, it will be done; and that the case is such, is a noble feature of the time. A beginning of the great enterprise was made in 1837, by the formation of the embankment along the river-side. It was three years more before any thing of the character of the work could show itself; and then, when the east end appeared to the height of the first floor, every one was astonished to find how far the apparition transcended all expectation of it that could be caused by descriptions and drawings.

In connection with this building, an innovation on the proceedings of Parliament was proposed in two successive sessions, and discussed at more length, and in a less creditable tone, than could have been expected. In July, 1835, it was proposed, in the House of Commons, that accommodation should be provided

Admission
of ladies to
debates.

in the new edifice for the presence of women at the debates. The proposal was made in a spirit and in language which went far to place every sensible woman on the same side of the question with Lord J. Russell, when he declared his disinclination to debate the matter, and his intention to oppose the motion.¹ Lord J. Russell was outvoted, however, and a committee was appointed to consider the subject.

¹ Hansard, xxix. p. 637.

The whole proceeding had much the air of an ill-bred joke, — the speech of the mover, the ostentatious eagerness to second it, the coarse mirth, and the large majority. On the next occasion, May 3, 1836, matters were worse, — the speeches more indecent, the mirth more flippant and unmanly, the majority larger in proportion. It seemed likely that the women of England might indeed be invited to be present at the deliberations of legislators whose method of invitation was an insult in itself, and who professed to wish for the presence of ladies, among other reasons, as a check upon intoxication and indecency of language.¹ But the affair was happily put an end to by means chiefly of a serious and sensible reply from the speaker, when asked for his opinion, on occasion of a grant for a ladies' gallery being proposed.² The grant was refused by a majority of 42 against 28. As for the merits of the question, when considered seriously, there was little difference of opinion. Those who advocated the admission of women in the gallery did not pretend to be thinking of the improvement of the women's knowledge, and the cultivation of their interest in subjects which concern every member of society, — those who are waiting for political participation, as well as those who have it. Every one knew that serious objects like these are best accomplished at home, as the speeches of legislators are certainly much better in the newspapers than as they are spoken. If the proposition of a ladies' gallery had been carried, the place would have been found to be occupied almost exclusively by giddy and frivolous women, fond of novelty, and with plenty of time to lose: a nuisance to the legislature, and a serious disadvantage to the wiser of their own sex, — inasmuch as these triflers would be understood, from their very presence, to be representatives of the Englishwomen who take an interest in politics; while, in reality, the latter class would be precisely those who would be reading and thinking at home. Whenever the time shall arrive when the legal position of woman in England comes fairly under the eye of the legislature, — a position so injurious as to extract from Lord Brougham the confession, in 1838, that the whole of the law was so atrocious as regards woman, that there is nothing to be done but to leave it alone, and keep it out of sight as long as possible,³ — it would be a serious disadvantage to Englishwomen to be judged of, as they inevitably would be, by such a sample as would have attended the debates on such an invitation as that of Mr. Grantley Berkeley and Mr. Villiers. As it was, the women of England gained something, — in the way of warning, how far they were from being respected by those who professed most regard for their

¹ Hansard, xxxiii. p. 531.

² Hansard, xxxv. p. 1078.

³ Hansard, xlv. pp. 779-784.

political improvement; and the House of Commons lost much in the way of character for sense and refinement. It had often exposed itself by the boyish passion and pot-house manners which had occasioned confusion within its walls; but it now outbid all former disgraces, and excited a disgust which was not likely to be forgotten. The simple-minded now knew something of the way in which some gentry talk when they get together,—like to like. The simple-minded were shocked; but they were glad to know the truth, and resolved to bear it in mind.

Every one admits, as a general declaration, that no subject can be more important, in the deliberations of Parliament, than the defence of its own privileges; yet the whole nation dislikes the subject, and is too apt to despise it. A troublesome and protracted and very serious conflict about the privileges of the Commons began in 1837. On the 6th of February, a petition was presented from Messrs. Hansard, the printers to the House, who stated that, in course of the ordinary authorized sale of parliamentary reports and papers to the public, a prison report had been sold, in which was contained a statement given in evidence, that certain prisoners were found reading obscene works, issued by a certain publisher, whose name was given,—J. J. Stockdale; that Stockdale had brought an action for libel against Messrs. Hansard in the Court of King's Bench, laying his damages at 20,000*l.*; that Messrs. Hansard had pleaded in justification the sanction and authority of the House of Commons; that the Court of King's Bench had ordered the plea to be struck off the record; and that Messrs. Hansard prayed the protection of the House.¹

The privilege of Parliament was not involved in the act of disallowing the Hansards' plea, the disallowance being merely on the ground that the plea was unnecessary for technical reasons; and, on this opening occasion, no one dreamed that the privilege of Parliament was in question at all. It was on occasion of the trial, the next day, that the controversy was raised. It was raised by Chief-Justice Denman, who said that he was not aware that the authority of the House of Commons could justify the publication of a libel. In his charge to the jury, he repeated his opinion with strong emphasis; and the jury accordingly found, that, though the book referred to was obscene and disgusting, the defendants were guilty of libel on the publisher. Within a week, the House took up the matter, and appointed a committee to investigate the question of privilege.² On the 30th of May, Lord Howick moved resolutions framed on the report of the committee, affirming that the House had full power to publish what it chose; that to bring the privileges of

¹ Hansard, xxxvi. p. 133.

² Hansard, xxxviii. p. 1113.

Parliament into discussion before any tribunal but Parliament itself, is a high breach of privilege; and that for any court or tribunal to assume to decide on the privileges of Parliament, otherwise than as carrying out the decisions of either House thereon, is contrary to the law of Parliament, and a breach and contempt of its privileges. Sir R. Peel supported these resolutions, against a set, of a contrary purport, proposed by Sir R. Inglis; and those supported by the two Parliamentary leaders were carried by a majority of 90 in a House of 162.¹

Here was the Court of King's Bench placed in direct and irreconcilable opposition to the House of Commons; Lord Chief-Justice Denman to the assembled representatives of the nation. It was no trifle, such a quarrel as this; and its issue was awaited with great anxiety by all who understood its bearings.

There is nothing more to be said of the action of Parliament during the reign. The Whig ministers were not men of business. They conveyed the impression of doubt about the quality and practicability of their own measures; ^{Weakness of the Administration.} and this was, in fact, inviting the obstruction or demolition of those measures. Every session became, to the sensations of those concerned in it, more and more like a troubled dream, wherein the sufferer is for ever struggling to get on, and for ever in vain. By this time, the ministers themselves had arrived at complaining that they could not carry their measures; and this provoked an inquiry, by no means spoken *sotto voce*, whether, in that case, they were fit for the very office whose business is to pass measures. They were obliged to endure, on occasion of the close of the reign, a speech of scornful reproach from Lord Lyndhurst, which they could not repel with answering scorn, because the Houses and the country knew that the taunts, though severely expressed, were mainly true. After showing that, at the end of a session of five months, only two measures of original importance had been passed, while seventy-five public bills were depending in the Commons, he declared: "Never was the state of business in the other House of Parliament in the situation in which it was at present; never did a government so neglect so important a part of its duty — that which it had to discharge in Parliament — as the government had done during the last five months."² The noble Viscount and his colleagues were utterly powerless. They were powerless alike in that and in the other House; they were utterly inefficient and incompetent as servants to the Crown; and he must add also, they were equally powerless, incapable, and inefficient as regarded the people. . . . He could only say, that almost every feasible and reasonable man had but one opinion; but one idea

¹ Hansard, xxxviii. p. 1121, 1134.

² Hansard, xxxviii. p. 1574.

was entertained regarding their conduct. It elicited the pity of their friends, and excited the scorn and derision of the enemies of their country. He gave them a picture of the present, — he had also given them a picture of the past. What, then, were their hopes for the future?”

There is no need to accept the vaticinations of an enemy as to the future of the Whig Ministry, as events will presently show us what it was. As for Lord Lyndhurst's pictures of the past and present, they were hailed by some, excited a smile in others, and were openly resented by very few. They were too nearly true to be strongly impugned. The Premier protested vaguely against them, and went home placidly conscious that he was no nearer going out of office for any thing that Lord Lyndhurst could say. A new period, affording fresh chances, was now setting in, during which they might show what they could do. The Premier might now have less leisure and license than hitherto for blowing feathers, and nursing sofa-cushions, and serenely swearing in the face of deputations; but he was entering on a new term of power, and was safe for the present, whatever sarcastic enemies and wearied friends and the indignant people might say about the incapacity of the Melbourne Ministry to carry on the business of the country.

CHAPTER IX.

THE history of our Whig Administrations is almost made up of obstruction on the part of their adversaries, and powerlessness on their own; but never were the Whig rulers reduced to more desperate straits than in the spring of 1837. They were supposed to have staked their existence on carrying their measures for Ireland; but they could not carry them. In the House of Lords the Tories cried out that the country was without a government; and the Radical members in the other House repeated the cry. The ministers were believed to desire earnestly the dissolution of the Parliament formed during the short Peel Administration; but the King would not hear of it. The King was believed to desire earnestly the resignation of the ministers; but the ministers did not appear to think of giving up. It was a state of things which could not endure long. When the change came, it was not exactly in the way that had been looked for.

The King's health had been better for the seven years since his accession than for a long previous period; and he enjoyed a remarkable exemption from the annual attack of hay-fever, — as it is called, — which had before regularly come on in June. At the beginning of 1837, his family had observed that his strength was not what it had been; but he was upwards of seventy, and some decline might be looked for. When May came in, he appeared to be aging rapidly. On the 17th, he was seated at the levee, for the first time, and looked worn and feeble. On returning to Windsor, he had difficulty in mounting the stairs, and sat down on the first sofa. He held a drawing-room the next day, was again seated, and observed to look still worse; but he was less fatigued in the evening, and was in high spirits the next day, — which was the anniversary of the battle of La Hogue.¹ He talked a great deal about our naval warfare, and was carried away by the favorite subject of our victories at sea during the last century. He was stopped two or three times by difficulty of breathing, but went on again. The next morning, Saturday the 20th, he was much the worse for the exertion, — could take no breakfast, and fell back fainting at

¹ Annual Register, 1837, misc. 370.

lunch-time, and again at dinner. It was clear that evening that he could not go to town in the morning, to be present at the re-opening of the Chapel Royal. It was ten at night before he gave it up; and he then left the drawing-room, never to enter it again. On Monday and Tuesday, he saw the ministers. On Wednesday there was a grand ball at St. James's, given by the King in celebration of the Princess Victoria attaining her majority. The ball was none of the merriest, from the absence of the King and Queen; but the King sent tokens of his kindly sympathy. He presented the Princess with a magnificent pianoforte, as his birthday-offering. He held a council on the Saturday; but was wheeled in a chair into the council-room, as he could no longer walk. When June arrived, he and those about him called his illness the old hay-fever. Whatever it was, it disappointed him of meeting the great parties he had invited for the Eton regatta on the 5th, and Ascot races afterwards. As he sat in his easy-chair, breathing with difficulty and sinking in weakness, the kind-hearted old man thought of various things which might add to the pleasure and comfort of the Eton lads, and others of his guests below; and many were the orders he gave. He insisted on the Queen's going to Ascot on the race-day, that there might be as little disappointment to the public as possible. She was not gone long; and, when she returned, she observed a considerable change for the worse, in those two hours. The dinner in St. George's Hall the next day was dull and sad; but there was talk of the King being removed to Brighton in the morning, when perhaps the sea-air might revive him. When the morning came, he was too ill to stir; and the guests at the castle all went away after breakfast. An extraordinary stillness prevailed; and now the King's danger was freely spoken of there and in London. The danger was supposed to be extreme; but he revived a little, and transacted some business with Sir Herbert Taylor the next day (the 9th), signing papers with much difficulty, but showing all necessary clearness of mind.

A bulletin was now first issued; but, on the morrow, the King was so much better as to lead even his own attendants to think that the attack might be got over for the time. The improvement was, however, merely owing to medicines which temporarily relieved the breathing. During his severest suffering, he was eminently patient, thankful for kind offices, and ever cheerful; and when he was relieved, it became evident how great had been the suffering which he had borne so quietly. His spirits rose, and he was full of thanksgiving. He was fully conscious of his danger throughout; and, sincerely believing that, from the youth of the Princess Victoria, it was desirable that he should live some years longer, he prayed for life, — not for his own sake, but for that of

the country. He had prayers read very frequently; and they always revived him. On the 13th, he chose to see the Hanoverian Minister on business; and, on the 14th, the Duke of Cumberland,—he and they, no doubt, being fully aware that the connection between the kingdoms of Hanover and England was hourly dissolving with his failing breath. Possibly, his desire to live ten years longer for the public good might have as much reference to Hanover as to Great Britain. For a few days more, he fluctuated between life and death,—now appearing to be breathing his last, and then signing a paper or two as he could rally his strength for the effort. His last act of sovereignty was signing the pardon of a condemned criminal. On the Sunday, he received the sacrament from the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury; and he appeared to derive so much solace from the mere presence of the Primate, though unable to speak or to listen much, that the Archbishop remained in the room till late into the night. The anniversary of Waterloo was always a great day with the King. The Duke of Wellington would not have held his usual banquet without complete assurance of the Queen's wishes; but the good old King's thoughtfulness settled the matter the day before. He sent a message to the Duke, to desire that the dinner might take place as usual, and to wish the host and guests a pleasant day. On the 19th, he saw all his children, and let them understand how fully aware he was that his death was just at hand. His last distinct and deliberate words appear to have been those which he addressed to the Primate ^{Death of the King.} at the moment of their final parting: "Believe me, I am a religious man." He sank during the night, and died soon after two in the morning.

And then took place that immediate opposite action,—that sudden revulsion of feeling,—which the demise of royalty seems to necessitate, but which can never, under any circumstances, fail to be painful to every reflective person.¹ Three carriages instantly drove up; and into those carriages went the Primate, the Earl of Albemarle, and Sir Henry Hallford, the royal physician. It was not five o'clock when they arrived at Kensington Palace. The doors were thrown open before them; in the morning sunshine stood the young Queen and her mother, expecting the news, and ready for that day's impressive business,—that birth to regality which, like the natural birth, can take place but once.¹ Having delivered their news, the messengers proceeded to London, to wake up the government and the nation with tidings of the accession of their Queen. ^{Accession of Queen Victoria.}

How widely were those tidings to extend! In a few hours

¹ Bulletin, June 26, 1837.

² Annual Register, 1837, Chron. 60.

they would spread in all directions to the sea; in a few days the Irish on their wild western coast, and the fishermen in the straits of the Orkneys, would be wondering how the young girl looked, and what she said when told that she held the highest rank and the largest power on earth. In a few weeks, her subjects in the furthest Canadian provinces of her dominions would be assembling in the clearings of the forest under the summer night, or in the broad moonlight on the prairie, to ask if any one knew how the Queen looked, and what she said when told the news. In a few months, turbaned messengers would be posting over the plains of India with the tidings; and in shaded rooms, or under the shelter of tents, people would be speculating in like manner on the first feelings of a young queen, and soldiers would swear to themselves and to each other to fight and die in her service. Somewhat later, the solitary shepherd on the Australian plains would be musing on the news dropped by a passenger from the coast; and would, if an exile through poverty or through crime, speculate on whether want or temptation could still oppress men so cruelly, now that a young queen, with a heart full of mercy, and power in her hands to do what she would, was to rule over a devoted people. It was an occasion which appealed to all hearts, — a time when romantic expectation took possession of many who never knew romance before, and some who had believed that they should never know expectation again. What every one most wanted to learn, was whether such exaltation and such hope were in the bosom of the young sovereign herself. Every movement, every tone, was eagerly and lovingly watched, on this extraordinary day of her life, and for some time afterwards; and, on this day, her demeanor was all that could be wished.

By nine o'clock, Lord Melbourne was at Kensington, was instantly admitted, and stayed half-an-hour, arranging for the assembling of the privy-council at eleven. Before noon came the lord mayor, with aldermen and other members of the corporation, to offer their duty on behalf of the city of London. Next arrived the King of Hanover, — the Ernest, Duke of Cumberland, whose confidential agent had propounded to the loyal Orangemen the scheme of setting aside this young girl from her inheritance, because she was a girl and young. Lord Lyndhurst lent him his carriage, that no time might be lost; but he left the palace in his own state-coach, — to start as soon as possible, for his new kingdom, which had presently cause to mourn his arrival much more than England did his departure. There

Severance of
Hanover from
England. was no word of regret, even in newspapers, for the loss of a collateral kingdom which had formed a part of the British Empire for a century and a quarter; and, if this

arose in part from the indifference of the nation to the possession of profitless foreign territory, it must be ascribed in part also to the general satisfaction at the departure of the Duke of Cumberland, and at the sceptre having passed down to a new generation, from which more might be hoped than could ever have been derived from that which had given the nation much to bear in many ways since the opening of the century.

On the meeting of the princes, peers, and other councillors, they signed the oath of allegiance; and the first name on the list was that of "Ernest," King of Hanover.¹ The Queen caused them all to be sworn in members of her council, and then addressed them; after which they issued orders

The council.

for the proclamation of Her Majesty. If the millions who longed to know how the young sovereign looked and felt, could have heard her first address, it would have gone far to satisfy them.

The address was, of course, prepared for her; but the manner and voice were her own, and they told much.

Queen's address.

Her manner was composed, modest, and dignified; her voice, firm and sweet; her reading, as usual, beautiful. She took the necessary oaths, and received the eager homage of the thronging nobility, without agitation or any kind of awkwardness. Her declaration contained an affectionate reference to the deceased King; an assertion of her attachment to the constitution of the country, and of her intention to rule in accordance with it; a grateful allusion to her mother's educational care of her; an avowal that, under circumstances of such eminent responsibility as hers, she relied for support and guidance on Divine Providence; and a pledge that her life should be devoted to the happiness of her people.² The ministers returned into her hands, and received again, the seals of their respective offices; the stamps in official use were ordered to be altered, and also the prayers of the Church which related to the royal family; the proclamation was prepared, and signed by the privy-councillors; and the Queen appointed the next day, Wednesday, for the ceremony. The first use of the great seal under the new reign was to authenticate the official proclamation, which was gazetted the same evening. During the whole morning, carriages were driving up rapidly, bringing visitors eager to offer their homage. What a day of whirl and fatigue for one in a position so lonely, at such tender years! How welcome must have been the night, and the quiet of her pillow, whatever might be the thoughts that rested upon it! The next morning, she appeared "extremely pale and fatigued;" and no wonder, for she had passed through a day which could never be paralleled.

While the eagerness of homage and duty was thus suddenly

¹ Annual Register, 1837, p. 237.

² Annual Register, 1837, Chron. 62.

gathering about the Kensington Palace, all was very still at Windsor. While the niece was receiving needful and most cordial assurances and offers of duty and support, the uncle was past all such needs. He had received all kind and dutiful offices with gratitude to the last; and now no one could do any thing more for him, or receive his thanks. An attached wife, and daughters who were long in recovering from the grief of his loss, were at hand; and every thing else was very still. Perhaps there might be, amidst the grief, a calmer sleep in the twilight of sovereignty here than in the bright dawn of it which was kindling in the other palace. And how different was the review of the life which had gone out from the anticipation of that which was just setting forth on a new career!

William Henry, the third son of George III., was born in August, 1765, and was therefore in his seventy-second year at the time of his death. He was destined for the sea, and became a midshipman at the age of fourteen.¹ It is amusing to read, at this distance of time, of the distresses of the Admiralty at the insubordination to rules shown by Prince William, when he had risen high enough in the service to have a ship of his own to play his pranks with. When he was two or three and twenty, he twice left a foreign station without leave; thus setting an example which might ruin the discipline of the navy, if left unpunished. But how adequately to punish a prince of the blood, was the perplexity of the Admiralty. They ordered him to remain in harbor at Plymouth for as long a time as he had absented himself from his proper post, and then to return to his foreign station. This was not enough, but it was thought to be all that could be done in such a case; and the prince was withdrawn from the active exercise of his profession, — from that time ascending through the gradations of naval rank as a mere matter of form. For twenty years, he continued thus to rise in naval rank, besides being made Duke of Clarence, with an allowance from Parliament of 12,000*l.* a year. During those twenty years, when he should have been active in his profession, he was living idly on shore, endeavoring after that enjoyment of domestic life for which he was eminently fitted, and from which our princes are so cruelly debarred by the operation of the Royal Marriage Act. The Duke of Clarence was the virtual husband of Mrs. Jordan, the most bewitching of actresses, and the queen of his heart during the best part of his life. They had ten children, — five sons and five daughters. It is averred by those who understand the matter well, that the conduct of the Duke of Clarence, in his unfortunate position, was as good as the circumstances permitted; that he was as faithful and generous to Mrs. Jordan

¹ Penny Cyclop. xxvii. p. 400.

as some parties declared him to be otherwise. When men place themselves in such a position, they are bound to bear all its consequences without complaint; and it is understood that the Duke of Clarence endured much complaint and undeserved imputation with a patience and silence which were truly respectable. His children, the Fitzclarence family, were received in society with a freedom very unusual in England under such circumstances; and, certainly, the strict English people appeared to be pleased rather than offended that the affectionate-hearted prince, to whom no real liberty of marriage had been left, should be surrounded in his old age by children who repaid his affection by exemplary duty and care. If this was a spectacle unfit — by the very mixture of goodness in it — for the Court of England, the harm that there was in it was ascribed to the position of royalty, rather than the fault of the prince; while all believed that no reparation to the purity of society could be effectually made by depriving the old man of the comfort of his children's society. Some of the family had occasion to find that forbearance could go even further than this; for they were left unhurt, except by universal censure, after their improper and foolish exertion of domestic influences against the Reform Bill and the Grey Administration. The King's relatives were ready to be as good-humored towards the Fitzclarences as the public were; and one of the early acts of the young Queen was continuing to them the allowance of 500*l.* a year each, which had been granted to them by their father. Most people thought there was a wide difference between their accepting this sum from a father who chanced to be the sovereign, and from a sovereign who was under no domestic obligation towards them at all: but the Fitzclarences appeared not to perceive this; and, when one of them soon after deliberately destroyed himself, he left a letter to the Queen, requesting that this income might be continued to his children, — a request of which it was thought right to take no notice. After the death of the Princess Charlotte, when many royal marriages took place, in competition for the succession, the Duke of Clarence married the eldest daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. No issue from this marriage survived, though two infants were born only to die. For a few months, as we have seen, the Duke of Clarence bore the dignity of Lord High-admiral; and he had previously performed a few holiday services on the sea by escorting and conveying royal visitors and adventurers across the Channel, and up and down in it. In politics, he had through life shown the same changeableness as in his conduct on the throne. On scarcely any subject was he firm but in his opposition to the abolition of slavery. He had not mind enough to grasp a great principle and hold to it; and, as he had not the obstinacy of his father and

elder brothers, he was necessarily infirm of purpose, and as difficult to deal with in state matters as any of his family. What the difficulty amounted to, the history of the reform movement shows. In other respects, there was no comparison between the comfort of intercourse with him and with the two preceding sovereigns. He had not the stupid self-will and self-sufficiency of George III., nor the vulgar and libertine selfishness of George IV. He was too harebrained to be relied on with regard to particular measures and opinions; but his benevolent concern for his people, his confiding courtesy to the ministers who were with him, whoever they might be, and his absence of self-regards, except where his timidity came into play, made him truly respectable and dear, in comparison with his predecessors. When his weakness was made conspicuous by incidents of the time, it seemed a pity that he should have been accidentally made a king; but then again some trait of benignity or patience or native humility would change the aspect of the case, and make it a subject of rejoicing that virtues of that class were seen upon the throne, to convince such of the people as might well doubt it that a king may have a heart, and that some of its overflow might be for them.

The funeral took place at night on the 8th of July, the Duke of Sussex being chief mourner.¹ For the last time, His funeral. the royal Crown of Hanover was placed beside the imperial Crown on the coffin of a King of England. The wife, who had so well performed her duties, was present. Queen Adelaide, now queen-dowager, was in the royal closet. When the coffin had been lowered, dust thrown upon it, the blessing pronounced, and the rocket sent up from the portal which was to cause the lowering of the flag on the Round Tower, the royal widow left the place, and was followed by the mourners, as soon as the style and titles of the new sovereign had been recited. There were no January night-fogs here, to peril the lives of the mourners; but, instead, a heat so stifling as to make the crowd glad to disperse at the first possible moment. On the 13th, the Queen, accompanied by her mother, left the old home at Kensington, to take possession of Buckingham Palace. It was the middle of the day; and crowds were waiting to cheer her on her passage to her regal home. She accepted the homage, but she was pale and grave; and there were none of her subjects who would not rather have seen this paleness and gravity than tokens of a gayer mood.

To some, it was not very far to look back to the May in which she was born, and the month — so soon afterwards — Queen Victoria. when the newspapers told of the Duke of Kent's illness; how he had come in with wet boots, and, "beguiled by the smiles of his infant princess," had played with the baby,

¹ Annual Register, 1837, Chron. p. 73.

instead of changing his boots, till it was too late, and he had caught the cold of which he died. The course of years now seemed very short during which they had watched the growth and training of the princess; and here she was,—out of her minority the other day, and now sovereign. What they had heard was favorable. If there had been omissions in her education, there had been no misguidance and no corruption. If the intellect had not been made the most of, the morals were pure, and the habits correct. From an early age the princess had been seen walking in all weathers; sometimes in winter, with thick shoes and a warm cloak, on a windy common. She kept early hours, and was active and scrupulously punctual,—apologizing for being half a minute late for an appointment, when that extraordinary circumstance happened once in her life. She had her allowance of money from an early age: her way of spending much of it was known at Tunbridge Wells, and other places of summer sojourn; but nobody ever heard of her being sixpence in debt for an hour. On the contrary, when her childish fancy was taken with some article which she wished to buy for a present to a cousin, she was seen to conclude at once that she must give it up, because she had not money enough till quarter-day to pay for it. And when it was put by for her,—to her great satisfaction,—it was as early as seven in the morning of quarter-day that she came down on her donkey, to secure her purchase. These things are no trifles. The energy and conscientiousness brought out by such training are blessings to a whole people; and a multitude of her more elderly subjects, to this day, feel a sort of delighted surprise as every year goes by without any irritation on any hand about regal extravagance, without any whispered stories of loans to the sovereign, without any mournful tales of ruined tradesmen and exasperated creditors. At first, the Queen was very rich,—many persons thought much too rich for a maiden-queen, whose calls could as yet be nothing. But in the first year she paid her father's heavy debts,—debts contracted before she was born. Next, she paid her mother's debts,—debts which she knew to be contracted on her account. We have seen what she did for the family of the late sovereign. Next, she married; and, properly enough, nothing was said about any increase of income. Now she has a large family of children, and such claims and liabilities as grow up out of twelve years of sovereignty; and still we hear nothing of any royal needs or debts. She lives on her income, and pays as she goes; and perhaps she can never know how much she gains of the respect and affection of her subjects, by a prudence and conscientiousness so unusual in royalty, but as graceful there as in any other station.

As for the domestic respectability in more important respects which might now be looked for, it was really refreshing to the heart and soul of the nation. A new generation was now on the throne; and there was no scandal as yet, nor any reason to suppose there ever would be any. Here was no corruption bred of the royal marriage-law, nothing illicit, nothing questionable; but, instead, a young girl, reared in health and simplicity, who might be expected to marry soon,—making her choice for herself, so that there was every hope that she might love her husband, and be a good and happy wife. Thus far, all was sound and rational; and the event has proved it so. The unsound and irrational part of the popular joy and expectation was that for which she herself was in no way responsible, and for the injustice of which towards herself her most truly loyal subjects were the most grieved. She was taken to be, not only more able and wise than she was, but more wise and able than any person of her years is ever seen to be,—not only more powerful than she was, but more so than any English sovereign, under our present constitution, can ever be; and there was every risk that, when disappointment came, as come it must, the innocent sovereign would be punished for the unreasonableness of her adoring subjects. The wise protested against any expectation that a second English queen would have the genius of Elizabeth, without her despotic tendencies; or her royal maternity of feeling towards her people, in an age when the function itself is destroyed by the growth of the representative system, and the sovereign is no longer the political ruler of England. The wise might protest; but the people, up to the most enlightened rank of them, expected from Queen Victoria things almost as wonderful as that she should go to the Rock of Cashel, accompanied by the Virgin, St. Francis, Daniel O'Connell, and Lord Normanby, and build up the old Munster Cathedral and the Catholic faith. Now that we had a virtuous sovereign, strong in the energies of youth, all was to go well; the Lords were to work well with the Commons, the people were to be educated, everybody was to have employment and food, all reforms were to be carried through, and she herself would never do any thing wrong, or make any mistakes. The few who pointed out that she was human and royal, and only eighteen; that it was an infinite blessing that she was pure and conscientious, and eminently truthful and sincere; that it was enough to expect, further, that she would be seriously willing to learn, careful in the choice of her advisers, and candid in recognizing her own mistakes; and that it was a cruel injustice to require of her what she could never perform, and then visit the disappointment upon her,—these few were thought cold and grudging in their loyalty, and

the gust of national joy swept them out of sight. In truth, they themselves felt the danger of being carried adrift from their justice and prudence, when they met their Queen, face to face, at her proclamation. As she stood at the window of ^{Queen pro-} St. James's Palace, on the morning after her acces- ^{claimed.} sion,—at a window where few people knew that she was to appear,—her pale face, wet with tears, but calm and simply grave,—her plain black dress and bands of brown hair, giving an air of Quaker-like neatness, which enhanced the gravity,—it was scarcely possible not to form wild hopes from such an aspect of sedateness; not to forget, that, even if imperfection in the sovereign herself were out of the question, there were limitations in her position which must make her powerless for the redemption of her people, except through a wise choice of advisers, and the incalculable influence of a virtuous example, shining abroad from the pinnacle of society. The comfort was at the moment, and has been more eminently so since, that there is a corresponding security in the powerlessness of British sovereigns. Whenever the “war of opinion,” of which the world had been now and then reminded since Canning's time, should overrun Europe, the danger would be for kings who govern as well as reign; or for those who really reign, instead of occupying the throne through a political fiction. If such an outbreak should occur in the time of Queen Victoria, she would, if personally blameless, be perfectly secure,—secure alike in her political sinecurism and her personal blamelessness. This truth, perceived and expressed at the time, has been confirmed by events sooner than some expected. While revolutions have come like whirlwinds to sweep kings from their continental thrones, our sovereign has sat safe in her island, with not a hair of the royal ermine raised by the blast. If, on the one hand, she has been wholly and necessarily unable to do many things that were expected from her by the unreasonable, who worshipped an idea, and not herself; on the other hand, we have her safe, and need fear no harm to the lightest of her royal sensibilities. If it is no longer the privilege it once was to be a sovereign, it is something of a blessing to have some power of kingly beneficence and influence still remaining, without the fearful responsibility for a ruling power which is mainly transferred to the people, and for which they must be responsible to each other.

As we have seen, the Queen returned to the late ministers their seals of office; and it was presently known ^{Continuance of the Melbourne Ministry.} throughout the country, that Lord Melbourne and his coadjutors were to be allowed another trial whether or not they could govern the country.

CHAPTER X.

IN his speech of reprobation against the ministers, before
Party
discontents. quoted, Lord Lyndhurst said he saw "but one ray of
comfort shining upon" the prospects of the country :
he augured much from the character of the new sovereign. His
party generally saw something brighter in the future,—more
rays of comfort than one.

The Melbourne Ministry was reduced to its lowest point of weakness and shame. After the elections of 1831, only six county seats had been held by Tory members, and the Whig government had a majority of 300. That majority had declined to 26; and, after the elections on the demise of the Crown, it sank again to 12. The Tories thought that a vigorous effort at the beginning of a new reign might give them every thing; and they were evidently resolved to spare no exertions to unseat six Reformers at least, and thus obtain a majority in the House. The case of the Whigs was desperate; and there is a tone in the political pamphlets of the time which shows this. The people were weary of the eternal disputes and party conflicts about Irish questions and Church questions, while the great interests that were dear to the Liberals of England and Scotland stood over for discussion in a future time which seemed further off every session. When a Ministry knows what it is about, and sets well about its work, the opposition helps to govern the country, and does it almost as effectually, by testing and purifying government measures, as the responsible party itself; but the Melbourne Administration was so weak and unskilful as to render the opposition purely destructive; and this was more than the country would or could bear. No small number of the Radical party themselves, and multitudes of the moderates throughout the country, began to declare that they hoped the Tories would get into office, so that the Whigs might recover vigor in opposition, and that the two reforming parties might once more come into union, and the country be, in one way or another, really governed once more. In such a condition of affairs, it was natural that the Conservatives should suppose themselves about to step into the seats of power. They were

already making declarations, or dropping hints of what they should do in such a case: they should not repeal the poor-law, nor interfere with any expressed and fulfilled decision of Parliament on any subject; but should preserve the Church from further spoliation; and so forth.

The alarm of the Whigs in office and their supporters is very evident now, to the reader of the election speeches and political pamphlets of 1837. The first thing they did was to assume full and exclusive possession of the young Queen's favor, ^{The Queen's} and to use to the utmost the advantage of her name in ^{favor.} the elections. There is no doubt that the Queen was ready to bestow her favor at once, on the pleasantest set of gentlemen she had ever known. She had seen little society before. Her life was necessarily somewhat monotonous. Now she was suddenly introduced into daily official intercourse with half-a-dozen of the most intelligent and accomplished gentlemen of the aristocracy, who felt a sort of chivalrous interest in her position; who admired her spirit, and were gratified by her confidence; whose instruction and guidance were necessary to her at every turn of her new and important life; and whose wives, sisters, and daughters were planted about her, to worship while they served her. It is no matter of surprise that she allowed the coterie to take complete possession of her confidence and favor, while she yet needed hourly support and guidance, and knew no one beyond themselves. To the thoughtless, and to those inexperienced in political life, it appeared natural enough that the offices about the Queen's person should be filled by ladies of the ministers' families: but the ministers were early warned of the inevitable consequences of such an arrangement; and they should have known them without being warned. If their own position had been less desperate, they might perhaps have paid more attention than they did to the future comfort and dignity of their royal mistress. They were timely warned, that the wives, daughters, and sisters of the present ministers could not remain about the Queen if the opposition leaders should come into power; and reminded that it would be hard upon the Queen to be obliged to dismiss her personal attendants on the first occasion of a change of Ministry. This was openly set forth thus early in the "Quarterly Review," and in various newspapers; yet Lord Melbourne took no heed to the warning; and he and his coadjutors must bear the reproach of whatever unpopularity the Queen incurred during the first two or three years of her reign, and of the perilous mistake in which she found herself in the spring of 1839. They had their own share of punishment in the disgust excited by their selfish use of the power they so eagerly grasped. There was not a child in England, old enough to look at a newspaper,

who did not see the unfairness of exclusively appropriating an inexperienced sovereign as the support of a party in the government which had no other support; and there was not a fine lady, or a footman, or an electioneering partizan, that did not feel the vulgarity of trumpeting the Queen's name on the Whig hustings, and using her favor for the chance of obtaining a majority in Parliament, which was otherwise hopeless. It is easy to enter into the feelings of these ministers and their families, — to conceive of the interest, to a sated man like Lord Melbourne, of a fresh and singular object of observation and study, — to one who was wont to despise women as he did, to find a young creature, truthful, conscientious, willing and eager to learn, and naturally led to learn of him, as a tutor or a father, as well as her first Minister. We can easily sympathize with the excitement and enjoyment to all the rest of affectionately watching over and serving her who was then, perhaps, the most interesting person in the world. We can conceive of the dismay and heart-sorrow with which they would contemplate such a thing as being severed from her, and yielding up their places to antagonists who were strangers to her, and who would be a complete barrier between them and her. Such feelings were perfectly natural; so natural that everybody knew they must exist, and looked to see how they would be disciplined and controlled by a sense of duty to the sovereign and the country. They were not so disciplined and controlled; and no one else had it in his power to do the Queen so much harm as she suffered from these devoted servants of hers. Lord Melbourne, always ostentatiously careless about business, was now for many hours daily at the palace. From the public and private talk of the coterie and their adherents, it was understood that the Queen had her partialities among parties at the elections. In a painful and unfortunate mistake made by the young sovereign, — a hasty suspicion touching the reputation of Lady Flora Hastings, — two of the matron ladies of the household exercised their influence so incautiously, and the Prime Minister supported the consequent proceedings with so little delicacy to a wounded spirit, that public feeling was deeply offended. Their exclusive possession of the palace enabled the impure and disloyal to conceive of scandal, and send forth rumors, which would never have been dreamed of if the royal household had been constituted on the ordinary principle of bringing together persons so impartial in political affairs, or so well balanced against each other, as to be able to retain their places, and give their sovereign the comfort of their customary attendance, through any changes in the Cabinet. It was very well to be prompt in calling the Bradshaws and the Robys to account, from the Home Office and the Horse Guards, for slandering the Queen at public

dinners; but members of Parliament and officers of the army would never have uttered or listened to such slanderers, if the guardianship of the Queen's domestic life had not been appropriated by a coterie. Yet, with all that their use of the Queen's name at the elections could do, the Whigs found themselves left with a majority of only twelve. A paragraph from a pamphlet of the day shows with what agonizing earnestness they were driven to sue the Radical Reformers for aid.¹ "All parties," says the writer, understood to be official, "those for the ballot, those for extended suffrage, those for the abolition of church-rates, those for grand plans of public education, those for the appropriation clause, those for municipal institutions in Ireland, those for yielding to Canada a more democratic form of government than at present exists there, should one and all enter the new session with this conviction thoroughly impressed upon their minds, that there is not one of these questions, no, not one, which is not secondary to the great object of maintaining Lord Melbourne's Cabinet, as the great agent of future improvement, free from every species of present embarrassment."

It was impossible to read this without amusement. Even the most devoted adherents of Lord Melbourne could not read gravely such an imitation of his easy assurance. The writer might have been Lord Melbourne himself for the impudence — there is no other word — with which he connected ideas of "improvement" and "freedom from embarrassment" with the Melbourne Administration. The reply of the Radical Reformers to this appeal was characteristic. They showed how the existence of the Melbourne Ministry depended on the prosecution of the very questions which it was proposed to put aside for the sake of it. They were willing to uphold the existing Administration with all their forces, if it would mend its ways; and without that it could not be helped by anybody. They pointed out that, throughout the country, the moderate Whigs, wearied out, were becoming Radicals every day; and intimated that, if the government would follow the example of these converts, it might be saved from ruin, but not otherwise. It might become Radical, or yield its place to the Conservatives: the one thing certain was that it could not remain what it was; and that a Tory rule would be better for the country, by rousing its energies, and testing its condition, than a continuance of a Whig government which was merely a name.

From the beginning of the reform struggle, the number of Radical Reformers in the House had never been less than 70 or 80; and in the last Parliament they had Radical-reform party. been 150. It was strange that they had not yet been a powerful

¹ "Domestic Prospects of the Country," &c.

party; and it would be stranger still if they did not become so now. Now was the time for them to show what they could do, when the Whigs were humbly asking alms of them,—petitioning them for ideas and measures, and the support without which they must sink. These Radical-reform members were men of conscience, of enlightenment, of intellectual ability, and moral earnestness, of good station, and, generally speaking, independent fortune. They were so unlike the vulgar Tory representation of them,—so far from being destructives and demagogues,—that the sober-minded of the community might more reasonably trust them for the conservation of property than either the Conservatives or the Whigs. Whig government under Lord Melbourne was a lottery; and all propositions of the time for shaving the fundholder, for tampering with the debt, for perilling the land by a return to poor-law abuses, for interfering with the rights of property in its public investments and private operations,—all such destructive schemes proceeded from the rankest Conservatives, and were exhibited in Quarterly Reviews, Tory newspaper-articles, Tory speeches on hustings. Not only in this sense were the Radicals no demagogues, and therefore fit to be the guides of the sober middle classes: they were also no popular orators. They were as far removed from influence over the mob by the philosophical steadiness of their individual aims, as from influence over the aristocracy by the philosophical depth and comprehensiveness of their views. They were as far from sharing the passion of the ignorant, as the selfish and shallow *nonchalance* of the aristocratic. They perceived principles which the untaught could not be made to see; and they had faith in principles when Lord Grey preached in his place that no one should hold to the impossible; and thus they were cut off from sympathy and its correlative power above and below. The aristocracy called them Destructives; and the non-electors knew nothing about them. All this should have been another form of appeal to them to make themselves felt in this gloomy time of crisis, when the fortunes of the nation were sinking at home, and storms seemed to be driving up from abroad, and the political virtue of Great Britain was in peril from a selfish powerlessness in high places, and despair in the lowest, and alternate apathy and passion in the regions which lay between. But there were reasons which prevented their making themselves felt. They were not properly a party, nor ever had been. There was not among them any one man who could merge the differences of the rest, and combine their working power, in deference to his own supremacy; and neither had they the other requisite,—experience in party organization. They might try for it, and now they probably would; but it was not a thing to be attained

in a day, or in a session. It was never attained at all, during this period of our political history. The chiefs moved and spoke; but they neither regenerated nor superseded the Whigs, nor could keep out the Conservatives, when, at last, public necessity overcame Whig tenacity of office, and the Queen's natural adherence to her first set of ministers, and brought in a new period marked by a complete dissolution and fresh fusion of parties. There was no other party which, in 1837, was known to include such men as Grote, and Molesworth, and Roebuck, — and Colonel Thompson, and Joseph Hume, and William Ewart, — and Charles Buller, and Ward, and Villiers, and Bulwer, and Strutt; such a phalanx of strength as these men, with their philosophy, their science, their reading, their experience, — the acuteness of some, the doggedness of others, — the seriousness of most, and the mirth of a few, — might have become, if they could have become a phalanx at all. But nothing was more remarkable about these men than their individuality. Colonel Thompson and Mr. Roebuck could never be conceived of as combining with any number of persons, for any object whatever; and they have so much to do, each in his individual function, that it would perhaps be an injury to the public service to withdraw them from that function; and, when we look at the names of the rest, reasons seem to rise up why they too could not enter into a party organization. Whether they could or not, they did not, conspicuously and effectively. They were called upon, before the opening of the new Parliament, to prove betimes that they were not single-subject men, — as reformers are pretty sure to be considered before they are compacted into a party; but to show that the principles which animated their prosecution of single reforms were applicable to the whole of legislation.¹ If Mr. Hume still took charge of finance, and Mr. Grote of the ballot, and Mr. Roebuck of Canada, and Sir W. Molesworth of colonization, and Mr. Ward of the appropriation principle, they must show that they were as competent to the enterprises of their friends, and of their enemies, as to their own. Many of them did this, but the association of their names with their particular measures might be too strong. They were never more regarded as a party during the period under our notice; and it may be observed now, though it was not then, that their failing to become a party in such a crisis as the last struggles of the Melbourne Ministry was a prophecy of the disintegration of parties which was at hand, and which is, in its turn, a prophecy of a new age in the political history of England.

What the Whig estimate of "the crisis" was in the autumn of 1837, we have seen. What the Tory view was, appears

¹ London and Westminster Review, xi. p. 25.

in the insulting speech of Lord Lyndhurst.¹ Here is the declaration of the Radical Reformers: "To the people, at the present moment, we have but one exhortation to give,—let them hold themselves in readiness. No one knows what times may be coming; no one knows how soon, or in what cause, his most strenuous exertions may be required. Ireland is already organized. Let England and Scotland be prepared at the first summons to start into political unions. Let the House of Commons be inundated with petitions on every subject on which Reformers are able to agree. Let Reformers meet, combine, and, above all, register. The time may be close at hand when the man who has lost a vote, which he might have given for the ballot, or for some other question of the first magnitude, will have cause bitterly to repent the negligence and supineness which have deprived him of his part in the struggle. All else may be left till the hour of need; but to secure a vote is a duty for which there is no postponement. This let the Reformers do; and let them then stand at their arms, and wait their opportunity."

This was but a lowering dayspring of regality for the young Queen. Her servants were weak, assailed by vehement foes, and pitied by the supporters of whom they implored help. Everybody seemed aware that something fearful was impending; and the wise uttered cautions, and sent out admonitions, while the sovereign was launching into the pleasures of freedom and supremacy. As yet, smiles were on her face, and joy was in her movements, whenever she was seen in public; and the most serious and severe of those who watched her, hoped that she would not be officiously and too soon alarmed by tidings of the storms that were driving up from afar, and the gloom of distress which was deepening over the people at home.

¹ London and Westminster Review, xi. p. 26.

CHAPTER XI.

As for the state of affairs abroad, on the accession of Victoria to the British throne, it was a subject of anxious contemplation to persons who looked beneath the surface of royal speeches and official summaries, with the prophecy of ^{Portents in Europe.} a war of opinion in Europe full in their minds. As yet, there was no threat from any quarter of a dissolution of the great continental peace; and sovereigns congratulated themselves each on his good understanding with other sovereigns; but there were movements in several countries which showed to the observant that the opposition of the principles of despotism and liberty,—of government for the people, and government by the people,—was working in the heart of society throughout Western Europe, while the process was keenly watched from the great throne of despotism in the East. Of all the countries in which the preparation for a decisive war of opinion was going on, France was, for various reasons, the most interesting to England.

The obvious domestic politics of France might have appeared dull and tiresome enough to those who did not know what they signified. It is truly wearisome to look over ^{France.} the debates of the French chambers, and see how the members were perpetually growing vehement about nothing at all; and pertinacious about the wording of a phrase, as if it had been the transfer of a Crown; and obstructive in so many ways that there was no keeping any Ministry in office. We read of new and newly arranged Cabinets, till it is impossible to remember their succession, or to report the causes of their changes. As our concern with France on this page is only in her relation to England, there is no need to enter into any detail of her official fluctuations; but only to point to the conclusion, from the parliamentary records of France during these years, that they include more than meets the eye. In truth, there was no real parliamentary representation in France; ^{The representation.} an uneasy consciousness of the fact was growing daily in the general mind; and the King was resolved to repress the conviction, and prevent its being communicated. His whole reign was a concealed conflict with the representative system which he had

sworn to maintain. Not only did he choose to rule instead of reigning: he chose to rule alone. His ministers must be his rivals if they were not his tools; and he "knew how"—using the French phrase—to reduce the representative system to a mere show. While it was thus with him and the nation, much that appeared trifling in the debates of the Chambers might be any thing but trifling,—might be symbolical of some great question, or prophetic of some great event. Leaving on one side, therefore, the manœuvres of Cabinets and Chambers, as giving us little knowledge but of that which may be better learned from events, we have only to take a rapid review of the transactions of the King with the French people, or with those of them who were brought into collision with him.

In 1835, a large number of petitions was presented to the Chamber of Deputies, exposing the deterioration of the representative system, and praying for a reform. As has been shown before, a change in the amount of qualification had raised the number of electors from 100,000 or less to 280,000; a number so small, in a population of above 30,000,000, as to make Englishmen wonder how it could afford any pretence of a popular representation at all. Yet it was to complain of the narrowing of even this constituency, that the petitions of 1835 were sent in. The cause of that narrowing was declared to be the law of inheritance, which, by continually lowering the incomes of individuals below the qualification-point, had already reduced the constituency to 180,000. Whether the cause was correctly stated or not, the fact was clear. And there were other facts well understood by the constituency, but not of a nature to be petitioned against at the moment,—that, by means of the centralizing principle on which French Administration proceeds, an amount of official patronage was in the hands of the government, by which it could subordinate the electoral colleges to almost any extent. The result of the present petitioning was satisfactory to the King at the moment; and he seems to have been as unable to look forward as Charles X. himself, and never to have heard or conceived of a possible war of opinion in Europe. He had in the Chamber, in this very session, 200 members wholly at his disposal as functionaries of his government; two-thirds of them removable at pleasure, and the other third in a position of expectation of the rewards of obedience. The majority of the Chamber found a pretext, without any difficulty, for ignoring the whole mass of petitions. Some petitioners desired such audacious changes as direct election, or universal suffrage in the primary electors, or abolition of the money-qualification, or payment to the deputies; and, because of these, the whole question was put aside. The King thought he was governing firmly and wisely

As for what the people thought,—they remembered, that, after five years' rule of the citizen-king, they found their constituency reduced more than a third, and the remainder lying within the royal grasp; and their thoughts of this citizen-king were none of the kindest.

One victory was gained by the opposition in the chamber,—much to the chagrin of the government, which was merely punished for driving too far a profitable monopoly of its own. The government succeeded in obtaining a renewal for five years of its tobacco-monopoly; but the Chamber decided, by a large majority, that a committee of its members should sit to inquire into the operation of the monopoly.¹ The introduction of parliamentary committees was an annoyance to a gov-
First Parli-
mentary com-
mittee.
 ernment like that of France. M. Salvandy could see no good in it; and he deprecated such an adoption of the barbarisms of the English constitution.

One other reference to England at this time is amusing. The financial affairs of France presented a worse aspect every year. Every year there was a new deficit, instead of a reparation of the last. Something must be done for the revival of commerce. The Minister of Commerce invited the merchants and manufacturers to enter with him into an inquiry into the prin-
Free-trade
inquiry.
 ciples of free-trade, and the operation of the existing restrictions under which affairs were proceeding so badly. The merchants and manufacturers of France seem to have had at that time as little knowledge and independence as our farmers of the same date. They would not have their system touched. Every corps stood up for the protection of its own article; as a valiant M.P. from the glass districts stood up against Mr. Huskisson in the British House of Commons for the duty on green-glass bottles. Whatever, in the changes of human affairs, might occur,—whatever that was hurtful or foolish might be swept away,—he owed it to his constituents to stand up to the last for the duty on green-glass bottles. With equal valor did a corps of twenty-nine eminent manufacturers of plated goods in France contend for the continuance of the existing prohibitory duty on import; declaring, among other reasons, that the English Government paid a large bounty on the exportation of plated goods; and that the men of Birmingham could supplant other manufacturers all over the world, because it was common for English lords to be sleeping-partners in the Birmingham establishments for the manufacture of plated goods.² It is both melancholy and amusing to look over the records of the proceedings of government and the Chamber about customs-duties during the present and two succeeding years. They wanted to improve the revenue,

¹ *Annuaire Historique*, 1835, pp. 24-33.

² *Annual Register*, 1835, p. 393.

and yet to keep the old duties; they were afraid to change their system at all, and yet could not go on with it as it was; they talked of removing prohibitions, but laid on prohibitory duties, as, for instance, a duty of 70*l.* on a Turkey carpet fifteen feet square, — which they called a relaxation from prohibition. The government found that it would take half the people to control the smuggling propensities of the other half; and it used its power of lessening duties during the weeks or months when the Chambers were not sitting; and sometimes the Chambers were induced to render such relaxations permanent. But no government is a good man-of-business about commercial matters. When relief was given in one place, it usually happened to be at the expense of hardship in another; and a temporary lowering of duties by royal ordinance affords little inducement to careful merchants to send goods which may not be sold before a recurrence to the old duties takes place. It did not mend the condition of the people that a tax was laid on sugar of home production, as soon as it was found that the beet-root sugar of France supplied one-third of the national consumption. It was a matter of some deliberation whether to relieve from duty the sugar of the colonies, or to tax that of the home producer. The latter course was resolved on, together with some reduction of the colonial duty; and the condition of the people was not to be improved in this direction.¹ The national poverty, previously great, had been deepening since the revolution of 1830. While he had before his eyes an annual deficiency in the revenue, a spreading poverty among the people, and a narrowing of the constituency by which alone they could speak their grievances, and hope to amend their affairs, the citizen-king thought he was governing firmly and well, and bringing the nation into order. He was hoping to keep the kettle bright and undimmed over the fire by stopping the spout after fastening down the lid.

The King was bent on bringing to trial some hundreds of his subjects accused of republicanism. The opposition desired an amnesty, and his ministers were so opposed to his dangerous and foolish design, that they laid down their offices; and for three weeks France was without a government. The King had his way at last; the ministers returned under a new head; and the Chamber of Peers was appointed to conduct the “monster trial,” as it was called at the time. They examined the case of 1000 prisoners, and selected 164 for trial. Then followed scandal upon scandal. The government and the bar fell out about the defence of the prisoners; and a sort of compromise was entered into at last, for the sake of safety, — a compromise which left both parties discontented. Then

Monster
trial.

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1837, p. 262.

the prisoners would not be defended as proposed, — would not acknowledge the jurisdiction of the court, — would not hear the accusation, and, after a time, would not come to the bar, — would not leave their beds, — would not rise from the floor of their cells where some chose to lie without any clothing whatever.¹ Never was such a scene witnessed in any court of justice as the demeanor of these prisoners, — the whole mob of them jumping, waving their hats, screaming, and defying the court and all its officers. Then followed the disposal of them in batches, as there was no other way of managing them; and by that method, the grand plea of the prosecution — of conspiracy among the prisoners generally to establish a republic — was in fact surrendered. One of the accused, in complaining of the method of trial, called Louis Philippe a tyrant, and threatened him with the tyrant's fate of exile; and for this offence, so excusable, as many thought, under the circumstances, the man, already on trial for a more serious offence, was condemned to a heavy fine, and to an imprisonment of five years, with loss of civil rights for that time. Of the Lyons batch of fifty-eight, nine were acquitted, and the rest condemned to terms of imprisonment, rising from three years to imprisonment for life.² As for the Paris batch, they made a hole through the wall of their wine-cellar, and walked out into the garden of a neighbor, and thence, many of them, out of the kingdom.³ Twenty-eight fugitives from the cellar published a threat that they would come back and compel the Peers to try them when the conditions of a fair trial had been secured for them. Only thirteen were stopped, or afterwards caught. It was naturally said that the escape was probably connived at, to rid the Peers and the country of the scandal and perplexity into which the self-will of the King had brought his government.

It was now no longer possible for the people to think the government of the citizen-king as good as he thought it himself. If he had been right in supposing that such a method of rule as his was the only one suitable to the French people, they could not be expected to agree with him; and, while the virtuous and sober-minded were grieving over their having been deceived and betrayed, — finding themselves now, after five years, without a free press, without popular representation, with an Administration of royal tools, with a failing exchequer, and surrounded by a distressed people, — it was no wonder that men who were not virtuous, and not sober-minded, should ponder the shortest way of getting rid of such a state of things, and decide upon the murder of the King. There seemed

Plots.

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1835, pp. 180, 231.² *Annuaire Hist.* 1835, p. 237.³ *Annuaire Hist.* 1833, p. 247.

to be no end to the attacks upon his life. Fieschi fired his infernal machine, as the royal procession passed, killing

Fieschi. and wounding between twenty and thirty persons; but not the King, who was saved by the moment of time required by the assassin for withdrawing the Persian window-blind from before his gun-barrels.¹ Marshal Mortier, late president of the council, was killed on the spot. Next, Alibaud made his attempt,

Alibaud. — coming up to the carriage-door, and resting his weapon on the window, while he fired, — the wife and sister of the King being in the carriage.² This time, the King was saved by the act of bowing to some National Guards at the other window. Next, Meunier made his attempt,

Meunier. shooting at the royal head as the carriage ploughed its way slowly through the snow. The King was untouched; but his eldest son was cut on the ear by the shivered glass.³ “I know not,” said the King, “how I escaped, as, at the moment, I had my head very much advanced towards the door of the carriage. Nemours, who was also leaning forwards, had his head against the glass.” Within two months, — in February, 1837, — Champion and his accomplices were finishing another infernal machine, which they resolved should not fail;

Champion. but the police found them out, and Champion hung himself in prison.⁴ In the next May, there was a review of the National Guards, — gloomy enough. Every house that commanded the ground was searched by the police, and the inhabitants examined; all the approaches were blockaded, and the ground well selected. Before the year was out, Hu-

Hubert. bert and Steuble were engaged on a third infernal machine, — “sixteen gun-barrels, in two rows of eight each,” — from which the King could by no means escape.⁵ But again the police found it all out. The public were weary of such stories by this time, and it seemed that the King could be taken good care of by the police; so there was an apathy among respectable citizens on this last occasion, which somewhat shocked the Government, and which was not dispersed even when the traitors became riotous on receiving sentence, and were sustained by the sympathy of the people in Court, who hissed, groaned, and cried “murder,” till the guards were called in to clear the place.

A military insurrection was interposed among these attempts at assassination. Napoleon and Josephine planned a marriage between Josephine's daughter Hortense, and Napoleon's **Strasburg** **insurrection.** third brother, Louis, for a time King of Holland; and this marriage was forced on, in defiance of the mutual dis-

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1835, p. 262.

² *Annuaire Hist.* 1836, p. 220.

³ *Annuaire Hist.* 1836, p. 279.

⁴ *Annuaire Hist.* 1837, p. 95.

⁵ *Annuaire Hist.* 1838, Chron. 162.

inclination of the parties most concerned. The union was a wretched one,—the husband and wife rarely meeting, and being quite unable to continue together. The only surviving issue of this marriage, at the date before us, was Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, then a captain of artillery in the Swiss service. He obtained a footing in the garrison of Strasburg; and on the morning of the 30th of October, 1836, showed himself there, in a dress resembling his uncle's, and proposed to call France to arms, to place him on the throne. Some of the men shouted for Napoleon II.; but, presently, while the Prince and some attendants were addressing a few soldiers in a barrack, the gates were shut upon them, and they were arrested.¹ By the end of November the Prince was half-way over the Atlantic, being banished to the United States. His accomplices were actually acquitted, in the face of indisputable evidence of their treason. The crowd, the garrison, and the general population of Strasburg, rejoiced without control, and spent the day as a fête; and the gloom of the ministers, and dismay of the King, were in proportion. The mother of Prince Louis Napoleon died in the next October, her failing health being broken up by anxiety for her only son.

Such events as these, bringing after them evidences of an unpopularity of the Sovereign, extending far beyond the mad conspirators themselves, seemed to have merely exasperated the self-will and folly of the King; and the most conspicuous proof of this, and of his unfitness for the office of citizen-king, appears in his insufferable repression of the press. Before the end of 1835, he was actually holding the position of Charles X. against the press. The prosecution of journals, and fining and imprisonment of editors, had gone on, till some of the liberal newspapers were ruined. The "Tribune" gave up, after having been prosecuted 112 times. But this was found insufficient; and new laws were proposed to protect the prosperity of France, "a prosperity of five years, intermingled with danger,"—by shielding "the King of her choice" against attacks. "Order was not yet completely established;" neither a Carlist press nor a republican press could be permitted to exist; and the law proposed for putting them down, equals any Carlist despotism which could be conceived of by a Polignac. Fine and imprisonment were to be the consequence of introducing the King, either directly or indirectly, or by any allusion, into any discussion of the acts of the government; also, of expressing any wish, hope, or threat, in relation to either Carlism or republicanism.² The Bill, with a long list of atrocious provisions, was carried by the power of the Crown and its functionaries; the heart-stricken opposition, who now saw their country and themselves under a precisely similar

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1836, p. 244.

² *Annuaire Hist.* 1835, p. 303.

oppression to that which they had thrown off five years before, giving solemn warning that "laws like the present might afflict, but could not terrify, good men;" and that the matter could not end here. The condition of the French nation, in regard to its liberties, was even worse than it had been in 1830; for now the blow at freedom of speech was struck, not only by King and ministers, but with the aid of the Chambers. The King had got but too much of the representation into his own grasp; and the state of the nation was so much worse than it had been in 1830, that good men thought it their duty rather to endure than to resist under circumstances so perilous to order and freedom. The King followed up this law with prosecutions of editors for assertions in their newspapers, that the ministers wished to show that they could now do what the ministers of Charles X. attempted in 1830; and that the army was not favorable to the Administration, and might be found inclined to a republic, if asked. There was also a creation of thirty new Peers, in the King's interest, immediately after the passage of the law which brought offences of the press under the jurisdiction of the Chamber of Peers. It is merely sickening to go into the details of the press-prosecutions of the period. The government was evidently nervous under the perpetual echoing of its own fears in the popular newspapers, — at the Carlist hints and demonstrations which followed on the death of Charles X. in 1836, and the speculations on the disaffection of the army which formed the commentary on the Strasburg affair; they had gone too far to recede; and now they found the objectionable matter which formed the material of the prosecutions reproduced in court, under circumstances of emphasis which made it ten times as pernicious as if it had been let alone. There were multitudes who recalled, and repeated to each other, the dying words of Lafayette, about their dreadful mistake in regard to their citizen-king; while the few, who looked ahead and afar, saw how France was daily losing her chance of assuming her proper place in the array of nations, whenever the war of opinion in Europe should arise.

Meantime, the one cheering topic in the King's speeches, in successive years, was his good understanding with England.¹ There had been a narrow escape from a war with America, — an escape purchased by a somewhat ignominious concession, — by a swallowing of some big, hard words, while paying money due to America, which ought to have been paid long before. There was a "momentary misunderstanding with Switzerland," threatening immediate collision, — turning upon the question whether

Relations with
England, and
with America.

With Switzer-
land.

¹ Annual Register, 1837, p. 253.

an incendiary of the name of Conseil was or was not a spy of the French Government. There had been "painful losses in Africa," which had "deeply afflicted" the King's heart. Algiers was a perpetual and a growing trouble, from its expensiveness and unprofitableness; and there were terrible reverses there at this period,—the indomitable Abd-el-Kader and the Emperor of Morocco having inflicted route and disaster, which could not be disguised or palliated even in the King's speech. The fact was, the French held merely their own fortified settlements in that which they called their colony of Algeria. Beyond the defences, nothing could be done; for a vigilant enemy, native to the soil, and animated by the fiercest love of country and religion, was always at hand to cut off stragglers, and destroy the processes of industry. From Algeria, nothing was heard of at this time but "painful losses," dismal anticipations, and warnings that the African foe was covertly supported by Turkey. The princes of the blood repaired to Africa to command and fight; large re-enforcements of men and money were sent; and there was new food for discontent at home, in the alleged misdirection of the civil and military affairs of Algeria, and that profitless expense of the settlement, which made it "an affliction to France." There was more unpopularity yet to be incurred by the King. He does not appear to have suffered by his clemency to the ministers of Charles X., whom he released on the death of their master, and permitted to reside on their own estates, on parole, — except Polignac, who was exiled for twenty years. His own constituent subjects had perhaps lost much of their indignant feeling towards the Polignacs and Peyronnets, now that a stronger indignation had been incurred by the successor of the old Bourbon King; and the sickly prisoners were allowed quietly to come forth from their captivity, and go home, to live there in obscurity. If the King lost nothing by this, neither did he gain much by an act of amnesty which accompanied it. By royal ordinance, issued in October, 1836, sixty-two political offenders were discharged from further punishment, being merely placed under the surveillance of the police.¹ It was thought that the consequences of political persecution were beginning to be apparent to the King, and that his prudence had taken the alarm; but his warfare with the press did not intermit or slacken, as we have seen. In his speech for 1837, he spoke of the finances as being "in a most prosperous state," — that is, promising a small surplus, in the place of the usual deficit; and he intimated that a great mass of public works would be undertaken, to give employment to the people. There was some

Release of
State prisoners.

¹ *Annaire Hist.* 1836, p. 237.

surprise at this tone being taken during a period of grievous commercial and agricultural distress; but the surprise ceased when it presently appeared that the King meant to ask the

Family endowments.

Chambers for money for family purposes. His children were growing up and marrying; and he now wanted a provision for the Duc de Nemours, his second son, for whom he asked a gift of two estates, and a marriage-portion for his eldest daughter, the Queen of the Belgians. The latter was obtained, after much angry debating, and many protests against enriching from the public purse the children of a king who was considered very wealthy in the possession of the property of the Crown, the estates of the House of Orleans, and, in the name of one of his sons, the wealth of the House of Condé. The other demand was withdrawn for the present, with much mortification on the part of the government; but the times were not such as made the people, or the Chambers, willing to endow the Duke de Nemours from the public purse. Another reason was, that a fresh call was to be made, on behalf of the eldest

Marriage of the Duke of Orleans.

son,—the Duke of Orleans,—who was about to marry the Princess Helena of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. The Chamber doubled the prince's allowance, hitherto 40,000*l.*; made a present of 40,000*l.* to the bride for her outfit; and fixed her jointure at 12,000*l.* The marriage took place in May, 1837; and in August of the next year was born the infant who was hailed as the heir of the throne of France.¹ There were many who doubted whether such would ever be his position; for it had long been said by impartial observers, that no son of the citizen-king would ever be permitted to succeed him. But there was probably no one who anticipated the full melancholy of that marriage, the domestic uneasiness, the sudden violent death of the Prince in the vigor of his years, and the expulsion of his widow and child from the kingdom, and from all hope of a throne. The superstition which is so easily excited in the French mind had, however, scope on occasion of the marriage,—as at the bridal of the Dauphin and Marie Antoinette in the last century, and of Napoleon and Marie Louise,—when fearful accidents happened. When the Duke and Duchess of Orleans entered Paris, a few days after their marriage, a sudden panic seized the crowds that were closely packed in the Champ de Mars. In the rush towards the outlets, nearly thirty persons were trampled to death; and many more were injured. Another child of the Orleans House was married in the autumn of the same year,—the beloved Princess Marie, the darling of her parents' hearts,—she who sculptured the Joan of Arc which is seen in many a house in

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1837, p. 268.

England, and is carried on the heads of Italian boys through all the streets of Europe.¹ This richly endowed young creature became the bride of Prince Alexander of Würtemberg; but his happiness was not to last long. He laid his young wife in her grave within fifteen months. Her constitution had been much shaken from her constant alarms for her father's life. She gave birth to a son in the autumn of 1838, became consumptive, and died on the 2d of January, 1839. The day after her death became known in Paris, the Chamber of Deputies rose, as by an impulse, to go and address the king; and this was the most numerous and the most cordial attendance of deputies that he had ever been greeted with.

We find no records of financial prosperity elsewhere than in the King's speech. Every other register tells of distress, embarrassment, fear, and local tumults. It was observed by the government, and told in the Chamber, that the number of foreign refugees in France was large, and continually on the increase. The Poles were treated with great favor, — being admitted free of cost to educational privileges, and trusted with office under government; it was not, therefore, surprising that there were then nearly 6,000 Poles in France. In this fact, perhaps, lay the most hopeful indication, that, in case of a war of opinion in Europe, France would be found in front of the Western combination which must oppose the incursion of despotism from the East. Amidst such gloom as has been described, — gloom over which the royal weddings of the year shed but a dim and partial light, — the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved, and men were left in expectation as to what the citizen-king would do with a new Parliament, and whether the Parliament would prove itself most worthy of King or people.

A man of an older time — a man of various times, and of a flexibility which adapted him to them all, Prince Talleyrand — was about to close his eyes on this new phase of French destiny. He was eighty-four, and it was time for him to be going. There was no further honor for him in the future: he had had his good things in his lifetime; whether they had made him happy or not, he must be satisfied with them now; for there was nothing more for him, — not a trace of true honor, — not a fragment of esteem, — not a movement of affection. He was the marvel of his age for suppleness and prosperity; and he will stand in history as a specimen, — dry and curious, — but in no way as a vital being, noble, beautiful, or interesting. He knew everybody for eighty years, — made use of everybody, — consorted with everybody, — flattered every-

¹ *Annuaire Hist. Chron.* 233.

body,—served anybody when there was no politic objection to doing so,—and cared for nobody. He preserved to the last his most conspicuous talents, being capable of flattery while almost incapable of speech. On the entrance of the King and his sister, a few hours before the old courtier's death, he exclaimed, "This is a great day for our house!"¹ It is possible, that, in virtue of his long training in worldliness, he might consider the day as more important to his house from a king's visit than from his own death. However that might be, he died at four the same afternoon, the 17th of May, 1838. The tidings of his death spread like a whiff of fresh air among those whom he had parched by the atmosphere of his worldliness. Yet the citizen-king is said to have left his Chamber in tears.

In Spain, nothing passed during the period under review that it is either pleasant or profitable to dwell on. The two interests which absorbed the Spanish nation were the Carlist war and the government of the Queen-regent. The liberal party throughout the west of Europe — both governments and individuals — were pledged to the maintenance of the infant Queen, Isabella II., upon the throne; and therefore the Queen-regent, her mother, was to govern under a profession of liberalism. It is well known now that she is not a woman who can conceive of the benefits of liberal institutions, or who could be trusted to rule at all. Hard, selfish, intriguing, hopelessly ignorant,—she was equally a misfortune, as mother of the little Queen, and regent of the country. Her daughter received no training which could fit her for her regal function;

and the country could learn no other lesson under Queen Isabella. Christina than to despise its rulers. The young Isabella had but a poor chance at best for health, sense, knowledge, and integrity. As it was, she became a spoiled child of the lowest order,—alternately humored and tyrannized over, flattered and mortified. She appeared before the eyes of her subjects as a sickly, fretful, and wilful child; eternally eating sweetmeats, and concocting caprices, and wholly incapable of intellectual entertainment or moral devotedness. The public news that reached her was of innumerable insurrections, in half the towns of her kingdom; street-fights, up to her palace doors; attacks on convents, and the murder of ten monks in one place, and twelve in another; seizure of plate from the altar; delivering up of ringleaders by their comrades; and the shooting of scores of citizens in a row. Then there were changes of ministry for ever; swearings to constitutions, one after another, each of which was to last for ever; pledges of reforms, pompously announced, and never carried out; professions of patriotism and universal

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1838, p. 402.

benevolence, which were met by imputations of the vilest political profligacy. Amidst the manifold misfortunes of the young queens of Spain and Portugal, none can be greater than the fearful hollowness by which they have been surrounded since their birth. They had better have been daughters of herdsmen on Etna, — out with their distaffs upon the slopes, and feeling the vibration under their feet, and seeing the sulphurous chasms open wherever they tread, and flying from clouds of poisonous ashes, — better have lived in honest apprehension like this, than have had their ears filled with talk of virtue which, from its staleness, fell dead upon the soul, and have been constantly in the reception of homage so false as to drive them to intrigue or self-will in mere pursuit of a welfare which they could not intrust to anybody else. What the young Isabella heard of was valor, devotedness, martyrdom for freedom, sublime disinterestedness; what she knew to be fact was treachery, cruelty, rapacity, selfish ambition, fickleness, and incapacity. As for the reforms proposed from time to time, and discussed by the Cortes, there was no leisure for their prosecution, amidst the perpetual alarms of war, and occurrence of insurrections; and the state of the finances was too desperate to afford hope of any really good government which did not begin by their rectification.

As for the other department of Spanish interests, — the war between the Queen and her uncle, Don Carlos, — it is too disgusting and terrible to be needlessly contemplated. In Carlist war 1835, the Carlists encouraged the discontents of the most extravagant of the liberal party, in the hope of profiting by the embarrassment of the government; and they succeeded. They obtained many advantages in the north of Spain, where the warfare chiefly lay. The cruelty on both sides became so atrocious, that the Duke of Wellington sent out Lord Eliot, during the short Peel Administration of that year, to endeavor to bring the hostile leaders to an agreement to spare the lives of their prisoners.¹ For a short time, this did good; but, in the next year, a circumstance happened which seemed to turn the combatants on both sides into devils; and it was from that time impossible for human power to soften the diabolism of the war. The mother of Cabrera, the Carlist leader of the hour, had been accused of some traitorous meddling, and, as the Queen's general declared in his own defence, sentenced to death. But she was a poor old woman of seventy, whose example, or whose life, could be of no public importance. The governor of Tortosa was required by the Queen's officer to deliver her up for execution, in retaliation for some slaughterous deeds of her son's. The governor refused; and application was made to General Mina, the

¹ Annual Register, 1835, p. 440.

Queen's commander-in-chief, who actually enforced the order, and had the poor creature shot in the public square of Tortosa. Cabrera was driven frantic by this act, being "romantically attached" to his mother. He declared that thirty women should suffer a similar fate, as his tribute to his mother's memory. He immediately executed four ladies — wives of officers — whom he had captured, and several more afterwards. This is enough. We see here all that is necessary to our review of the time, and to our appreciation of the part taken in the war by Englishmen. It is not pleasant to have to record, that Englishmen had any share whatever in a war so barbarous as to shed more or less disgrace on all who voluntarily aided either side; and so ill conducted as to cast no reflex glory on the act. There is something repugnant to the feelings of Englishmen, in our present age and state of advancement, in our countrymen going forth as mercenaries, by their own choice, to fight in a quarrel of succession in any foreign country; and our inclination leads us to be as cursory as possible in our notice of the British Legion which went to Spain under General Evans in 1835.

When the Queen's government became alarmed by the successes of the Carlists in that year, the Cabinet applied for aid to the three powers in alliance with Spain, — Britain, France, and Portugal. Britain declined to send troops, though she would not object to France doing so; and the arms and ammunition already furnished, to the amount of 200,000*l.*, were considered sufficient. France followed the example of England; promising, however, that the Pyrenean frontier should be watched, that no assistance might reach the Carlists by that way. Portugal was bound by a recent treaty to send 6000 troops when required; but it was found inconvenient and dangerous to do so, and the Queen broke her engagement, — breaking up her Cabinet, and one or two succeeding ones on the occasion. Failing thus far, the Spanish Cabinet next desired of the King of England that he would suspend the Foreign Enlistment Act, that the Spanish government might raise in England a body of 11,000 mercenaries.¹ This was done in June, 1835; and, during the summer months, the strange spectacle was seen of recruiting through the towns and villages of Great Britain. It is impossible that the merits of the case could have been understood by all those who enlisted. They went out to war as a trade or an adventure, without even the name of a great popular cause to inscribe upon their banners.² We have an account of the affair from a volunteer who owns that he anticipated but little fighting, but hoped that the mere showing themselves would put force into the Queen's troops, and

¹ Order in Council, June 10, 1835.

² Autobiography of a Workingman, p. 429.

annihilate the Carlists; and then he intended to write a book about Spain, and publish it when he came home at the end of a year. A melancholy picture might be given from his pages of the exasperating and humiliating sufferings undergone by the British Legion in Spain, and the insulting ingratitude with which they were treated; but this is needless, as the whole affair ought to be regarded as a private speculation, — no more claiming a place in history than any unfortunate commercial or agricultural adventure, by sea or land. The soldiers of the Legion were starved, frozen, shot, distrusted, deceived, forsaken, and finally left unpaid. In the midst of all this, an order issued by General Evans cast a fearful light on the nature of the enterprise which he led. He issued a proclamation in June, 1836, declaring that, as the Legion was now in junction with the British marines, every Englishman found fighting on the side of Don Carlos would be put to death as a traitor to the King of England.¹ A commander of mercenaries could with an ill grace so threaten mercenaries on the other side, — be the Royal Marines present or absent. If the Foreign Enlistment Act was suspended, it was unreasonable to quarrel with men for using their freedom of enlistment in aid of any cause which might seem good in their eyes. Either way, it appeared that Englishmen were to slay Englishmen in a cause for which none of them cared.

<sup>Carlist incur-
sions.</sup>

During these years, the Carlists now and then swept through Spain and back again to their mountains, as if to prove that they were not unacceptable to the nation who let them pass, without hinderance and without loss. Now we see them down in the extreme south-west, — on the very coast, — often hemmed in, but always getting out, and dragging two or three royal armies helplessly after them; and again at the gates of Madrid, — the Queen quaking in her palace, or flying by night. In the year 1838, the Carlists received some checks, in alternation with their victories. Don Carlos married in that year, — his sister-in-law, the widow of Don Pedro, having crossed France privately to become his bride, under a dispensation from the Pope. It was hoped that this lady might bring some humanizing influences into his camp, and relieve the horror with which it was regarded by the world. As for the royal cause, the Queen-regent spoke in strong terms of the friendship of the Queen of England, and of hope from various sources: but her voice and manner were faint and faltering, and no one wondered; for the State was bankrupt in fact, while pompous in professions; and the forlorn condition of her little daughter must have struck the Regent more forcibly than ever while she was exhibiting the value of the friendship of the Queen of England.²

¹ Annual Register, 1836, p. 389.

² Annual Register, 1838, p. 435.

It seemed somewhat like a mockery of the monarchical system from one point of view, or an emphatic tribute to it from another, that there should have been at one time three young Queens. ^{Three young Queens.} three Queens in Europe who came to the throne between the ages of three and eighteen; a mockery, if the mental and moral qualities of two out of the three were regarded, and a tribute to the power of the theory and ideal when it was seen how all were supported in their kingly seat, — whether in consequence or in spite of their personal qualities. The spoiled child in Spain, and the wilful girl in Portugal, were queens still, in the midst of State poverty, turbulence, and popular discontents without end, — as truly as the intelligent and conscientious Victoria, who had reached womanhood before she became queen. Isabella was not yet old enough to cause trouble to her ministers by her own qualities; but her neighbor at Lisbon was. ^{Portugal.} The Queen of Portugal was seventeen when she married again in 1835; and she had been for some time out of her minority. She left her ministers no peace. A serious quarrel at this time was about making her new husband commander-in-chief. She was resolved that it should be so, and had agreed expressly to the arrangement as a part of the marriage stipulations, though her ministers and Parliament were pledged by a late decision, made to meet the case, not to permit any foreigner to hold that most responsible office. Ministry and Parliament were broken up in consequence; and, in the midst of the confusion, before the new Cortes met, there was a revolution: the Queen was compelled to accept the constitution of 1820, and to deprive her husband of his office, because it was incompatible with the working of that constitution. The assent of the Queen and her friends to the instrument was obtained by mere force, — by the military surrounding the palace. From that time, incessant fluctuations were taking place; risings, fallings, successes, reverses, of the different political parties in the State; till the mind of the reader becomes confused, and gives up all hope of understanding the politics of Portugal. Two matters, however, stand out clear. An heir to the throne was born in September, 1837; and another son, in October, 1838. ^{Birth of heir.} And the great commercial treaty with Great Britain, the Methuen Treaty, expired, on notice from the Portuguese government. Efforts were made for the renewal of the treaty; but the disturbed state of public affairs prevented any settlement. ^{Methuen Treaty.} This might be of less consequence to England than old-fashioned statesmen might easily suppose. Mr. Clay said to an English traveller at Washington, in 1835, "I cannot but wonder at the anxiety of your ministers about the Methuen Treaty, while they think so little of free-trade with growing nations. In Portugal you never had, and never will

have, any thing but two millions of priests and beggars for customers; while here you might have sixteen millions at once,—likely to double their number in a quarter of a century.” Those who saw the matter from Mr. Clay’s point of view cared little for the renewal of any commercial treaty with Portugal, except from a natural tendency to hold to “our old and faithful ally;” a description which imports more to an English ear than an American can be expected to understand.

There were other points only too clear in the condition and temper of Portugal. Our “old and faithful ally” ^{English in Portugal.} was very unhappy, and therefore very ill-tempered.

The English were treated with an insolence and malignity which could not have been endured but through a proud compassion. The British auxiliaries were unpaid: and they received nothing but insult when they applied for their dues. So outrageous was the spirit against the English, that their admiral on the station thought it necessary to issue a general order to his captains not to visit the palace, or hold any communication with persons in authority, lest the intention of England should be misunderstood.¹ The British were above taking offence,—so low was their poor ally sunk; but they endeavored to avoid all occasion of quarrel. At this time, Portugal was bankrupt, and was in danger of a public announcement of ^{Portuguese indigence.} the fact. In the summer of 1838, there was a run on the banks of Lisbon and Oporto; and the Cortes proposed to declare a national bankruptcy. The Bank of Lisbon and a mercantile company offered a loan to avert this catastrophe; and, after some hesitation and debate, it was accepted. For some time past, there had been no paper and printing allowed for the acts of the Cortes, from the positive beggary of the treasury. It was clear that the British auxiliaries need not expect their pay. It was also very clear, that, if a war of opinion in Europe should arise, the western element of constitutional freedom could hardly be re-enforced by either Spain or Portugal.

As for the central countries of Europe, they yielded ample evidence, to those who were on the watch, that the ^{Central Europe.} storm was daily gathering which must burst before a genuine peace could be relied on for Europe. Those conflicts of opinion were going forward which would lead to war, sooner or later; and, in this short period, the advance towards a crisis is perceptible enough. The debated questions during the time were religious, political, and commercial,—the commercial being of importance chiefly as being in fact political. Another token of preparation for a future general conflict was that political affinities, and no longer territorial relations, began to determine the

¹ Annual Register, 1837, p. 324.

classification of European parties. The despots of the East and old-fashioned diplomatists talked of geographical alliances as an ordination of nature,—as the safe old principle to which the world would return, as soon as demagogues could be silenced: but not the less did men of a higher sagacity perceive, that all geographical alliances must give way before the force of political affinities; that Poland and Hungary could not be kept down, if they chose to be free, however surrounded by the despotism of the eastern section of Europe; and that Portugal could not enjoy rational liberty at all the more for her position, unless she became capable of freedom within herself.

This period is remarkable for the formation of the great commercial league of Germany. The States of Germany Zoll Verein. had hitherto gone to work, each in its own way, about its customs-duties,—about fixing their amount, and levying them. Each little State had its own complete fence of custom-houses, and its own scale of duties; and the inconvenience, injury, and ill-humor caused by such a plan were clear to everybody. It was the King of Prussia who exerted himself to substitute a better system; and his ultimate success was an excellent test of the temper and commercial philosophy of Englishmen. Many made an outcry that it was the Emperor of Russia who was really the mover,—instigating his Prussian friend to an achievement by which he hoped to humble the manufacturing and commercial consequence of Great Britain; but the true free-traders of England saw the matter in a happier light. They saw that England must make haste to remove what restrictions remained on any branch of her commerce; but, that done, it would be cause of mere rejoicing when restrictions on commerce were done away in any part of the world, since the natural prosperity of any one part is more or less good for every other. Such observers looked on with deep interest, unmixed with fear, while State after State joined the great league,—one being at length persuaded to lower its duties, and another to raise them, till the desired equalization was established, and the countries of Germany ceased to be foreign to each other. Baden held out long, on account of her nearness to France; but she joined in 1835. Nassau held out one year longer. The free city of Frankfort was kept back by an existing treaty with England which was incompatible with the new arrangement: but the British government saw how Frankfort would be injured by exclusion from the league, and, with her, such British commerce as went forward there; and the treaty was given up. In January, 1836, Frankfort entered the league, and the King of Prussia saw his great work complete, though no one called it faultless. Some of its provisions were seen to be unwise, and others might turn out so

in practice; but here was a commercial union, extending from the Baltic and the Niemen to the Alps and the Lake of Constance. Old-fashioned politicians regarded with satisfaction what they took for a return to a natural state of territorial sympathy; while men of the new school saw in the arrangement an important aid in the preservation of peace, in times of political irritation. A commercial treaty between Austria and England was concluded in 1838, by which the Danube was freely opened to British vessels, as far as Galatz; and all British ports, with Malta and Gibraltar, as freely to Austrian vessels. Under the dread of Russia, which at this period afflicted a great number of Englishmen to a point beyond all reason and all dignity, this treaty was regarded as a Russian work, as much as the Prussian league; and it was predicted, that, by a quiet neglect of shoals and sand-bars near the outlets of the Danube, Russia would obtain almost exclusive control over the pulsations of that great artery of the life of despotism.

Austrian
commercial
treaty.

Exaggerated and malignant as were the fears of some of our countrymen about Russia, there were few sensible men who thought them wholly baseless. No one who looked forward to an ultimate war of opinion in Europe could fail to see that Russia herself occupied nearly one-half of the speculation. She might be poor, in proportion to her bulk,—ill compacted, corrupt, slavish, possessed of few of the modern elements of power; but she had the ancient, and they would tell for much in a struggle to establish ancient principles of domination. She was military throughout her whole organization,—as completely formed for foreign invasion as incapable of domestic prosperity and peace. She sits looking abroad over Europe,—the representative there of Asiatic despotism; and her character does not change as years pass on. While modification proceeds everywhere else,—while Denmark and Prussia were talking of having Parliaments, and Austria was penetrated by new ideas, Russia has remained what she was,—possessed of the ancient elements of power, and universally supposed to be inclined to use them for the destruction of the modern, which are in her eyes purely a nuisance. She was not inactive while thus unchangeable. She has her feelers out in all extremities of the earth and bounds of the sea, and everywhere she silently plants her force while men are looking another way. Wherever people of any nation go, they find that Russia has been before them. If they go fur-hunting in the northern wilds of America, they come upon a Russian fort. If they wander to an inland sea in Asia, on some commanding promontory they find a Russian fort. Among the swamps of an African delta, or the sands at the mouth of the Red River, they find a Russian fort. If these are not hints of a

project of a future universal empire, they are at least a fact which should go for what it is worth, on the face of it. It may be absurd enough to allege, — as some wild terrorists have done, — that a British statesman has, in our day, been found purchasable by Russian gold; it may be fanciful to imagine the voice of Russia to be whispering the terms of every treaty, and the hand of Russia conducting every transaction throughout the length and breadth of Europe: but it would be mere carelessness not to watch her movements, and a treachery to the cause of freedom to forget that from Russia will proceed, sooner or later, the most perilous attacks she has yet to sustain.

Putting aside the surmises of alarmists, we find the Emperor of Russia laying a heavy hand, here and there, on the destinies of nations. In the autumn of 1835, he met the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Austria, in the course of a journey; but, whether the despots had any purpose in meeting beyond reviewing their troops, no one knew. On his return, the Emperor of Russia stopped at Warsaw; and the violence of his imperial wrath there expressed went so much beyond what appeared prudent to everybody but himself, that it was widely believed that he was mad. He told the authorities of Warsaw that he was calm, and spoke without rancor: and he assured them, that, if they cherished any illusion of the nationality of Poland, it should be the worse for them; if they manifested in any way such an idea, he would level Warsaw with the ground.¹ He desired that what he said might be fixed in their memories; and, truly, it was not likely to be forgotten. The speech found its way into a French newspaper; and thence it spread over the world, greatly reviving popular sympathy with the Polish cause. This was increased by his audacious act of raising a loan in the name of Poland, which caused the Polish refugees in all countries to warn the world publicly that Poland disclaimed the loan, and considered every man the enemy of that country who contributed by this mode to the increase of its burdens. As for Turkey, she was wholly in the power of Russia, now that Russia had saved her from Egypt; and she obeyed, when required to promise that no armed vessel should pass from the Mediterranean into the Black Sea, without the express permission of Russia. In the Treaty of Adrianople, Circassia had been made over to Russia; but the Circassians did not acquiesce, and fought a noble battle, from year to year, in resistance to the annexation. The best rulers and soldiers of the East in our time have come from Circassia; and no one wonders at this who watches the conflict between the exasperation of Russia and the patriotism

The Emperor at Warsaw.

Passage of the Dardanelles.

Circassia.

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1835, p. 455.

of Circassia. During the period before us, the Russians made little or no progress, — the climate and structure of the country being as fatal to them as favorable to the inhabitants. This war brought England into apparent danger of a collision with Russia. An English vessel, the “Vixen,” landed salt on the coast, at a port which the Circassians had recovered from their foe. A Russian cruiser seized the “Vixen” on the plea that she had transgressed some customs regulations, and also that she had landed ammunition for the benefit of the Circassians. The last allegation was positively denied; and, as for the first, it was declared that Russia had no right to impose customs regulations at that part of the coast. The legality of the seizure was discussed in Parliament and the newspapers, till most people were convinced that the affair was a mere plot of a few factious men to embroil the two countries; and the subject was dropped at last, without any distinct claim of release being made by the British Government. The tone of Russia towards the people who were successfully resisting her may be judged of by the wording of a letter from the invading general, Williamineff, to the patriot chiefs.¹ Copies were taken, and the letter was read with a painful kind of amusement throughout Europe: “Are you not aware, that, if the heavens should fall, Russia could prop them with her bayonets? The English may be good mechanics and artisans, but power dwells only with Russia. No country ever waged successful war against her. Russia is the most powerful of all nations. If you desire peace, you must be convinced that there are but two powers in existence, — God in heaven, and the emperor upon earth.” Meantime, the emperor began to see his way into Persian politics. He was appointed arbiter about a question of succession to the Persian throne; and, though the Persia. decision was in this case made prematurely by death, — the intended heir having died before his father, — the idea of Russian intervention was introduced, and thus — as the enemies of Russia did not fail to observe — a step was gained in the advance upon British India.

Nowhere did the despot's hand press more heavily than upon Cracow. By the Vienna Congress, Cracow, with its Cracow. small territory, had been declared a free State, under the protection of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, who were bound by the strongest terms to respect its independence, while stipulating that deserters and outlaws from their respective countries should be delivered up on demand of the governments. Some Poles and other refugees had settled in Cracow; some were married, and had lived there for several years. On the emperor's saint's day, expressions were uttered which, reaching

¹ Annual Register, 1837, p. 357.

his ear, did not please him. His wrath, into which he drew Austria and Prussia, fell like a thunderbolt upon the city. A complete clearance of Cracow from all liberal refugees within eight days was ordered; and, cruel as was the order, it was enforced by the troops of the three powers taking possession of the city which they had guaranteed from the entrance of any armed force.¹ The scene of the expulsion was dreadful: when it was over, 2000 of the Austrian troops remained; and presently, the exemplary and religious guardians of the liberty of Cracow began to remodel its institutions, according to their own notions. They dismissed the militia; excluded foreigners and foreign publications; established a truly Russian censorship of the press; ordained the support of the Greek Church by the State; and dismissed the Diet,—postponing indefinitely its next meeting. It is difficult to write these facts without comment, but any comment would weaken their operation. It is difficult to endure the sight, through the eye of the mind, of the anguish and rage of the citizens under this oppression of unsurpassed profligacy, without some endeavor to express their feelings for them; but, in the sobriety of the spirit of history, we must let facts speak for themselves that can speak as these do, and thus appoint Nicholas of Russia his own historian.

It was not the Emperor Francis I. of Austria who acted with Nicholas in this matter. The Emperor Francis,—
Death of the Emperor of Austria. the good, the paternal, who stroked the heads of children in the streets, and shut up the noblest men of his dominions at Spielberg, and prayed for them while there, and starved them with cold and hunger, and tortured their feelings, and turned their brains, and was so good as to let this be known by permitting Silvio Pellico to tell his story through the press, in order that foolish and troublesome people might be deterred from a rebellion which would cost them so dear,—this “gospel” ruler died in March, 1835, after a reign of forty-three years. It was said that he left his empire as safe and prosperous as he found it. It might be as prosperous, but time alone could show whether it was as safe. Time has shown that it was not so. The astute Metternich remained at the helm of the State; and it was thought that the notorious imbecility of the new Emperor would not matter, while his Minister’s ability was available. But Metternich was old; and, though able, he was not wise. *The wisdom of despots is never more than a temporary shift;* and temporary shifts are of very short date indeed in our age of the world, and in prospect of a war of opinion in Europe. Before three years were over, we find Metternich threatening war with Switzerland on account of the refugees harbored in her free

¹ Annuaire Hist. 1836, p. 317.

States, and provoking a religious quarrel which a really wise statesman would have gone a long way round to avoid. But of that we shall have to speak briefly under our next head. Meantime, it may be recorded that the helpless Austrian Emperor, Ferdinand I., was crowned at Milan, in September, 1838,—the iron crown being placed upon his wretched head, on which sat the fate which mocked at the temporary shift. There was an astonishing environment of barbaric splendor, such as might catch the eye of the foolish sovereign and the foolish among his people, and of the Italians, who were not truly his people; but in the midst sat the fate which decreed that the puppet Emperor should be released from his vain show of sovereignty in a few years, when a sovereignty must be either nothing, or something better than a vain show.¹ There is nothing more to tell of his or any rule in Italy during this period. It was elsewhere that the patriots of Italy were preparing for their part in the European war of opinion; and on her soil there was nothing more remarkable than the ravages of cholera, and the horrors which grew out of the ignorant consternation of the people, who believed that the plague was the work, or rather the malignant sport, of the doctors and their tools among the tradesmen.

Coronation
of Ferdi-
nand I.

The new King, Ernest of Hanover, lost no time in proving himself a true brother of the craft of statesmanship, of which Nicholas of Russia was the present head. He fulfilled all the expectations of Colonel Fairman and the Orange Peers of England and Scotland. During the reigns of his two brothers, it had become a common story in England, how well the Hanoverians had gone on under the Duke of Cambridge and others who presided, and how suddenly every thing was tumult when the Duke of Cumberland arrived. And so it was now. In his pure and pathetic love for his people,—of which he spoke with tender earnestness on every occasion of oppression—he set them by the ears together in the shortest possible time. He arrived in his capital on the 28th of June, 1837, and on the 8th of July announced in his letters-patent his intention of setting aside the constitution of Hanover. He had prorogued the Assembly of Estates—the Hanoverian Parliament—immediately on his arrival. In November he dissolved it, and annulled the constitution, of his own will and pleasure, declaring that it had never been valid. It was not to be expected that everybody would agree in this.² Among others, seven professors of the University of Göttingen refused to proceed with the election of a representative, while the constitution was suspended. All the seven were immediately displaced by

Hanover.

Proceedings
of the King.

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1838, *Chron.* 229.

² *Annual Register*, 1837, p. 336.

the King, and three of them banished. Then followed riots at Göttingen, as might be expected. The students left the lecture-rooms, and escorted their exiled professors over the frontier. The King wanted to make out that the seven recusants were condemned by the other authorities of the university; and immediately six more professors came forward to declare their sympathy with the exiles. The military scoured the streets; but, when they had made all quiet for the moment, the business was not over. The smaller States of Germany were alarmed and angry at the King's proceedings. Baden first protested against them, as in violation of the federal league of Germany; and Bavaria and Saxony followed the example of Baden. The Hanoverians are understood to have agreed to use no violence, and to keep their tempers while guarding their liberties. The King was old, and too bad to mend; they would keep him in check, and wait for a new reign. So the adverse parties blundered on, the King making no progress with his new constitution, while his people declared the old one to be in force. In June, 1838, the Assembly voted down the new constitution, and the King prorogued the Assembly. The affair now came before the Germanic Diet at Frankfort, and was discussed, as a matter affecting every one of them, by various States; and Würtemberg declared that the act of the King of Hanover affected the legal condition of all Germany. In the next year, King Ernest declared that he had withdrawn his proposed constitution, and that that of 1819 continued in force; but the Chambers voted down the constitution of 1819, and were prorogued for two months. The Germanic Diet, however, voted the validity of that constitution; and thus satisfied all parties as to the soundness of the basis on which affairs rested, while all were deliberating as to what should be done next. In 1840, the King offered a constitution which contained almost every thing specified by the Chambers.

New constitution.

A deputation from the Assembly waited on him to express gratitude and joy; and he declared that their kind words made him feel as if a stone were taken from his heart. He had by this time found that governing people who had their own ideas, as he had his, was a less easy and smooth affair than he and his adherents had imagined, when Colonel Fairman proposed to include the British Isles under his sovereignty.¹

He must have wondered greatly at the King of Denmark for having spontaneously offered to his people something in the shape of a Parliament. The Danes had suffered so much, in ancient times, from the oppressions of the aristocracy, that they had, two centuries before, besought their king, Frederick III., to take all power into his own hands; and

¹ Annual Register, 1840, p. 197.

Denmark had been under despotic government ever since. Now, in 1835, the King had declared his desire to be assisted by the co-operation of his subjects, and enlightened by a knowledge of their wishes. He did not propose to alter the constitution with which the nation appeared to have been satisfied for nearly two centuries; but he proposed to add to it some regulations for the advancement of popular interests. The people were to elect representatives, who should meet at stated periods to discuss affairs, and declare an opinion, for the King's guidance, preparatory to the framing of his decrees. Opening of a representation. The elections were to be direct, and the electoral terms were liberal.¹ This movement of the King of Denmark may be regarded as one of the most remarkable signs of the times.

There was a good deal of disputing, during this period, between the ill-assorted pair, — Sweden and Norway. The feudal, aristocratic Sweden was haughty, and treated sturdy, Sweden and Norway. democratic Norway in a way she did not choose to put up with. The dispute was about the Norwegian flag, and the commerce which should be conducted under it, — Sweden so acting as to give the world to understand, that there was no Norwegian flag and commerce except as included under those of Sweden. In 1838, Norway obtained much of what she desired, by a concession of the King's, — that her vessels should carry the Norwegian instead of the union flag, when south of Cape Finisterre, and in other remote parts. The unfortunate Prince, through whose conduct and misfortunes Sweden had lost her provinces of Pomerania and Finland, and gained her new constitution and peace with Russia, — the deposed Gustavus Adolphus IV., — died in Switzerland, in February, 1837.² Another of the determined enemies of Napoleon's person and policy was thus withdrawn; and the great soldier's reign seemed thrown back yet further into the past. It was the horror of Gustavus IV. at the murder of the Duke d'Enghien, which mainly determined his own fate and that of the kingdom of Sweden. His latter days were passed in poverty, as well as exile, from his resolute determination to accept of no assistance from any quarter.

The disputes between Holland and Belgium, sometimes suspended for a term, were renewed with great vehemence, from the King of Holland having cut some wood in the territory of Luxembourg, — the possession of which was Holland and Belgium. now the main cause of dispute. In 1832, Belgium agreed to the terms proposed by arbitrators; but Holland stood out. Now, in 1838, Holland was willing to agree; but Belgium refused, — declaring that a delay of six years justified a rejection of terms

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1835, p. 445.² *Annual Register*, 1837, Chron. 176.

which were agreed to only for the sake of immediate peace. It was evident, however, that Belgium would have to yield; and, meantime, it was both amusing and painful to travellers to see how the village tone of spite and rivalry subsisted, unsoftened by time, among the merchants of Rotterdam and Antwerp. In 1835, the Belgian Government found itself driven, by popular fears and discontents, to an act of great impolicy, whose utter fruitlessness was presently apparent. The duties on foreign cottons were raised, on the demand of the operatives of Ghent, to a point which encouraged smuggling to a destructive extent. In the next year, an act was passed, establishing municipal institutions for all the towns and districts. This was nothing new; such institutions having subsisted before, but, since the separation from Holland, in a state which required regulation. The new act gave more power to the Government in the appointment of officers than it had before; but this loss of some popular rights was felt to be more than compensated for by the provisions for the better ascertainment and working of the rest.

The remaining class of troubles and prognostics is that in which religious liberties are concerned, either alone or in connection with political questions. The new cluster of associates, called, in 1835, "Young Germany," or "Young Literature," was the especial horror of the old-fashioned rulers of Europe. Its members — who were denounced, in the established language of reprobation, as deists, atheists, democrats, debauchees; men bent on destroying religion, morality, and society, — but who might, if asked, have given a somewhat different account of their views and objects — had withdrawn into France and Belgium, and thence sent forth their writings. All the governments presently agreed to use all the means in their power to prevent the publication and circulation of the works of Young Germany; but, as long experience has proved, it is not in the power of governments to coerce the press effectually; and the proscribed works continued to be written, printed, and read. The next attempt, in 1836, was to prevent the writers passing from one State into another; and the Germanic Diet adopted resolutions for this object, which brought them into collision with the legislatures of the respective States, as unwisely as their previous action against the liberty of the press.¹ The Swiss Directory was peremptorily required to deliver up the members of the Young Germany Clubs, or to coerce them; and a disagreement among the cantons, as to how far they would admit these demands of foreign governments, was one cause of the trouble and dissensions which agitated Switzerland during this period.

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1836, p. 296.

The troubles of Switzerland were too many and too intricate to be followed out here. We can do little more than remark, that religion was implicated with most of them. One serious quarrel with France was on account of the ^{Switzerland.} conduct of the grand-council of Basel, in breaking through a contract, on the ground of the religion of the purchaser of an estate. A French banker had purchased an estate, and paid for it; but, when the Basel authorities heard that he was a Jew, they annulled the contract.¹ France considered this a breach of treaty, and threatened war. Out of this grew more bigotry, and further disputes; and several times it appeared impossible that peace could be preserved. The Catholic and Protestant cantons were also becoming discontented with each other, and the Protestant and Catholic parties within the particular cantons. When it became clear that something must be done, opinions were taken as to the policy of revising the federal settlement; a measure which was favored by some, and opposed by others. While this was under discussion, Prince Louis Napoleon returned from America, and pursued other objects than attending the death-bed of his mother. With a selfishness as remarkable ^{Prince Louis Napoleon.} as his folly, he at once embroiled Switzerland with France. He had obtained citizenship in Thurgau; and the inhabitants were therefore implicated in his quarrel, as they could not admit that a citizen of their State could be ordered away on the command of a foreign government. The Prince allowed the passions of both parties to become exasperated on his account, and even permitted the affair to proceed so far as that the French ambassador was ordered to demand his passports, before he withdrew himself from the hospitality which he was enjoying at the expense of the peace of nations.² It remains inexplicable what this Prince imagined he had to give, that could compensate to the French people and their neighbors, for the mischiefs that he was perpetually devising, and the tumults that he was endeavoring to draw them into.

The Austrian Government in the same year committed a more daring outrage on the rights of conscience than could have been supposed possible in the age in which we live. ^{Zillertal} In the Ziller valley, in the Tyrol, lived some people ^{Protestants.} — under 500 in number — who had become Protestants some dozen years before, and who practised their religion in peace and quiet in their mountain retreat. They were warned by government, that they must not stay there, unless they joined the Catholic Church, but they might repair to any Protestant part of the empire. They clung to their mountain-home; and a denial of civil rights was next resorted to. They were per-

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1835, p. 504.² *Annuaire Hist.* 1838, p. 292.

secuted with every kind of social vexation that could be inflicted, and forbidden to practise their religion. Their churches were closed, and their every act watched and made painful; till, worn out at length, they prayed for permission to emigrate into Prussia,—which was exactly what Metternich wanted.¹ The Prussian Government invited them to settle in Silesia; and there they went, the exhausted and indignant victims of a religious persecution, which has disgraced our age.

The Prussian Government was meantime a sinner in the same direction. The King of Prussia actually attempted to bring together the two fiercely opposed parties in Silesia,—
Lutherans of Prussia. the Lutherans and the Reformed,—by amalgamating their modes of worship. The Lutherans objected, and opposed some of their clergy who would have enforced the union. The government insisted that the union was voluntary; but the people did not find it so in practice. They soon saw their pastors deprived; and they refused to admit successors. Then ensued a struggle for the pulpits, and the calling in of the soldiery to quell disturbance; and all the other painful experience of rulers, who try to coerce consciences, ending with an extensive emigration of the Lutherans to Australia and elsewhere.² Then there was the quarrel between the Prussian Government and the Catholic Church,—the grave dispute whether, under the concordat of 1821, the Church was or was not independent of the government. The occasions which were sure to arise presented themselves in 1837, and related to marriages between Catholics
Mixed marriages. and Protestants, and to the doctrines of Professor Hermes. The Catholic Clergy were beginning to object to the mixed marriages which they had hitherto sanctioned; and they revived a forgotten decree of the Council of Trent as their authority. The Prussian Government obtained, from Pope Pious VIII., a dispensation from this decree; but so ambiguously worded as to be of little use.³ The Archbishop of Cologne made use of this to set aside the brief, and required a pledge from the parties married, that the children should be brought up in the Catholic faith. The government arrested the Archbishop; the existing Pope, Gregory XVI., supported him; the clergy supported the Archbishop; and the soldiery fulfilled the commands of the King; and Protestants and Catholics went on intermarrying,—some Protestants pledging themselves that the children should be brought up in the Catholic faith, and others relying on the royal promise of protection against the displeasure of Pope and priest. The other affair

¹ Annual Register, 1838, p. 469.

² Persecution of Lutheran Church in Prussia, p. 112.

³ Annuaire Hist. 1837, p. 401.

was old-fashioned enough, — the proscription and persecution of a book and its author. The Archbishop required of the clergy to refuse absolution to all who attended the lectures of Professor Hermes and his followers at the University of Bonn; and the King, who thought this was going too far, required the Prelate to abdicate, which he refused to do. He therefore remained a prisoner of State, and the King of Prussia was left in the midst of an open quarrel with the Pope and the clergy.

In Hesse-Cassel there was a religious disturbance too. The multitude were told that the sect of the Pietists were not only opposed to human learning for themselves, but were trying to keep knowledge from the people; and they forthwith broke the windows of the Pietists, and made so much disturbance as to cause the muster of all the forces of the State. It was plain enough that they were in want of more knowledge, whether the Pietists desired or not to keep it from them.¹

The Hungarians, whose lot has since become so interesting, were already astir. In 1837, district diets were meeting to consult about reforms: among which they demanded of the Austrian Government the substitution of the Hungarian for the Latin language, in all public acts; and the removal of the Jesuits from the direction of public instruction.² Since that day, the Hungarian nation has been industriously preparing itself for that liberty — that independence of Austria — for which it appealed to arms in 1848.

It appears from this review, that the European war of opinion had already begun in some slight skirmishes, which showed that the forces of the East and the West were mustering on the field, or hastening towards it. The young Queen Victoria and her people might be quiet at home; for no despotism threatened them, and for them liberty was achieved to that point which rendered certain the attainment of more, as it should be wanted. With them, all was as safe as social affairs can be in an age when they are but imperfectly understood; and, if the sovereign and nation looked abroad over the great future battle-field, it was for instruction and from sympathy, and not from any reasons of personal hope or fear.

¹ Annual Register, 1835, p. 481.

² Annuaire Hist. 1837, p. 394.

ness now, and so did his coadjutors; and it was understood by everybody but the government at home. Colonel Grey went to Washington; and immediately all was well there. All danger of war was presently over; and the British and American forces were co-operating on the frontier. The French population, thus deprived of hope from the borderers, settled down in a kind of sullen resignation, and left off plotting rebellion. The British were annoyed that the French were kindly treated, and their loyalty became of a soberer kind. In Upper Canada, Lord Durham persuaded Sir George Arthur to give up all his plans of hanging rebels, and to publish a general amnesty; by which minds were set at rest. Before June was out, provision was made for paving and lighting, and furnishing a good police to Quebec and Montreal. By means of a land-commission, a path was opened to colonists, and the most abundant of all sources of colonial prosperity was freely opened up. A good court of appeal was constituted of the judges, with two additional members. By imperial act, the new Executive Council was made the supreme appellate tribunal. A registry of land-titles was instituted, and a commutation of the feudal tenures of Montreal provided for, as a beginning of a general commutation. An education commission saw its way to the establishment of a general system of education by which the adverse races might be united in schools and colleges, so that in another generation their present animosity might have become a tradition.

These were not small things to have done in the course of a few weeks; but there were two affairs — one more immediately embarrassing, the other more eminently important, than any of these — which still more deeply engaged the minds of the Governor-general and his coadjutors. The permanently important subject was the scheme of constituting a federal union of the British North American Provinces, for the two objects of securing good government for these colonies themselves, and of providing a counterbalance to the increasing power of the United States in the Western hemisphere. This scheme appears to be one of those whose fulfilment is only a question of time. It has been suggested and resuggested by statesmen, from Mr. Fox downwards, — if not from an earlier date still. Mr. Roebuck introduced it, formally and completely, in the House of Commons, in April, 1837; and Sir R. Peel, Lord Howick, Mr. Ellice, and others, declared their approval of it.¹ Lord Durham began immediately to inquire and act, — conceiving that no surer means of securing peace in the colonies could be found than uniting their legislation in matters of common interest to them all, — such as the conduct of their defence

Scheme of
federal Union
of colonies.

¹ Hansard, xxxvii. p. 1209.

never-ending and most humbling displays of incapacity and unfitness for the time. We have seen how, so late as the accession of the Queen, in the summer of 1837,—so late as the termination of the elections consequent on that event, in October of the same year,—there was every desire to support any Administration which made any profession of reform, if only the government would show enough sincerity to preserve its own existence. The difficult and doubtful alliance was preserved chiefly by the knowledge that such a man as Lord Durham was connected with the government,—a man who had shown something of what he could do in his construction of the Reform Bill, and whose declaration against allowing an hour to pass over recognized abuses without an endeavor to reform them, was still sounding in the ears of all true Reformers. Some additional vigor was given to the hope of the Reformers by the treatment of Lord Durham's name, both by the Whigs in power and those dismissed from power. The first spoke of him as "imprudent and impracticable;" supporting the charge only by anecdotes which told simply of frankness, honesty, earnestness, and a thorough understanding of principles; and the others, Lord Brougham and his adherents, spoke of Lord Durham with a rancor and vehemently affected contempt which betrayed both fear and jealousy. It was reasonably supposed by those who heard this kind of detraction, that so perpetual a misconstruction of Lord Durham's words and actions, and so virulent a ridicule of his actual foibles, must proceed from some expectation that Lord Durham was likely to become a man of high importance to that political party which had given up all hope from Lord Brougham. The difficult and doubtful alliance of parties which was, in a manner, preserved over the elections of the autumn of 1837, was, however, dissolved before the expiration of the year. The chief organ of the Radical Reformers declared, in January, 1838, "The ministers are now understood. The alliance between them and the Radicals is broken, never more to be re-united."¹ The reason of this was that the affairs of Canada had come to a crisis; that that all-important colony was now to be lost or won; and that the ministers were treating the question with an ignorance, and indifference to the rights of the colonists and to the principles of political liberty, which drove into opposition all who at once cared for political liberties and understood the circumstances of the case. The case was briefly this:—

Canada became a British possession in 1763. Its population then was about 70,000. It was governed under old French law, which disappeared in France at the Revolution; and the enjoyment of their customs, as well as their rights, was guaranteed to the people on their becoming British subjects.

¹ London and Westminster Review, xii. p. 504.

They fell into some British notions and ways, however, amidst their entire content under British rule; and by 1774 they were ready for a more regular organization of government.

^{Quebec Act, 1774.} This was effected by the Quebec Act of that year, by which a Council was appointed, to assist the Governor, and to have, with him, legislative powers in all matters except taxation. But, ready as the Canadians were to grow into British ways of thinking and acting, the happy process was stopped by the statesmen at home, who thought that, by being kept as French as possible, they might be preserved from striving after that independence for which the American colonies south of the St. Lawrence were struggling. By the Quebec Act, the French civil law was re-established, and the English criminal law alone remained. For several years after this, English merchants and others became residents in Quebec and Montreal; and, towards the end of the century, those emigrants obtained — what the French residents had not thought about — a legislature like that

^{Canadian Legislature, 1791.} at home. There was a House of Representatives, elected by forty-shilling freeholders; and a Council appointed by the Crown, wherein office was held for life, and might be made hereditary, at the pleasure of the Crown. The French inhabitants were alarmed at the idea of the power that would thus be given to the British residents; and they declared themselves perfectly happy under the Quebec Act, and averse to any change. The dangers that they pointed out — dangers to their religion and to the public peace, in case of the British getting the upper hand — appeared so probable, that government decided to divide the province, drawing the line along the boundary of the French settlements. The country to the west was to be purely British, while the French were to keep themselves as unchanged as they pleased. The government had no misgiving about this in 1791, when the thing was done; but Mr. Fox foresaw the mischief that might arise, and gave emphatic warning of it. For many years, his warnings went for nothing; for the colony was contented, and the scheme of division appeared to work well. The French took little interest in politics, and did not even watch over the liberties given them by their own institutions. Both races were extremely loyal, and they fought well for Britain in the second American war.

It was the era which brought peace to us that introduced the elements of strife into Canada. After the peace of 1815, there was a great emigration into Canada. Many thousands of men disengaged from the war having now to settle down in a home, a considerable number went to Canada; and among these were some who were disappointed at finding a less fair field for exertion than they had expected. In Lower Canada,

^{Operations of the peace.}

French laws and customs were in their way; and, in the Upper Province, there was a sort of aristocracy of the strong loyalists, who hated their neighbors of the United States, — having themselves come to Canada, rather than live under the union. On the other hand, these loyalists were not at all pleased at the competition set up by the new-comers; and the French in the Lower Province were alarmed at the arrival of so many British as threatened to swamp their race and interests in no long time. These French formed the first political ^{Rise of parties.} opposition ever known in Canada; and, in the Upper Province, there was presently an opposition too, — only, it consisted, not of the old residents, but of the new-comers.

All this was clearly a simple process of advance from colonial infancy to a less dependent and more stirring condition; and government showed that it thought so, by requiring the colony to bear more than hitherto of its expenses. All possible care should have been taken at home to render the long transition which had now begun, as easy as it could be made by a spirit of justice and watchful superintending care, while the young colony was trying its powers. Instead of this, and wholly by the fault of the imperial government, an opposition was now permitted to arise between the Executive and Legislature, such as is considered a fatal circumstance at home when it is the ^{The Assembly and the Council.} work of a Stuart, — a circumstance so fatal as to justify the armed resistance of a Hampden and a Cromwell. As long as it was possible, the Canadian Executive went on in its own way, strengthening its power by enlarging its patronage, and disregarding the fruitless complaints of the Assembly; but when the Assembly proceeded to try whether or not it had any power, — whether it was a reality or a mockery, — when it began to pass measures to weaken the other branch or to strengthen its own, the government interposed with an act worthy only of the Stuarts. The Legislative Council was composed of Tories, who would be sure to contravene the proceedings of the Assembly. From that time, the struggle between the branches of the government in Canada became disgraceful to the mother-country which had permitted it. Each party was as provoking as possible to the other; but every one must see that the Assembly was the party most to be considered and pitied. It represented the large majority of the inhabitants of both Provinces, who found themselves not only excluded from office and influence, but unable to get any good measure passed; as every popular measure was, as a matter of course, thrown out by the ^{Stopping the supplies, 1833.} Council. Under these circumstances, the Assembly of the Lower Province stopped the supplies for the payment of official salaries in 1833; and the Upper Province followed the

example in 1836. The demands which they thus enforced were different in the two provinces,—the Upper, requiring that the Executive Council should be made responsible to the Assembly; and the Lower, that the Legislative Council should be made elective. This last demand was in accordance with the opinion of Mr. Fox, given forty years before, in a speech which had prophesied the evils that in fact had arisen; but it was solemnly refused by the Imperial Legislature in the form of an assent, by an overpowering majority, to the resolutions proposed by Lord John Russell on the 6th of March, 1837. The division took place on the 14th of April, when the Minister was supported by a majority of 269 to 46.¹

The Lower Canadians were only roused by this. They supposed the British Government to be ignorant of the state of the case; and this ignorance might be dispelled by a troublesome perseverance in demands. At any rate, whatever had been obtained from the government during a long course of years had been gained by means of incessant demands, and of dogged refusal of every thing that it was in their power to refuse till their demands were granted. Those rulers have much to answer for who teach any people such a lesson as this; yet Lord John Russell saw so little into the culpability of the government as to declare, in the speech which alienated his best supporters, that the government of Canada had been one long course of concessions. The government of a growing colony ought always to be a long course of concessions; and, if the government be bad, the difference is that the concessions are less advantageous, from being extorted, than they would have been if made for better reasons.

The rage excited in Canada by the news of the decision of the House of Commons was extreme. Threats of armed resistance flew abroad over the country; and with them newspapers filled with seditious articles, expressed with the vehemence common in the political literature of all colonies. Government did not venture to bring the authors to trial, knowing that the juries would acquit. As far as anybody knew, nothing was done, from month to month, to redress the grievances complained of by the Assembly; and the people were exasperated beyond control. Two persons arrested for sedition were rescued, on the impulse of the moment, by some armed peasants. The spark was struck among the gunpowder, and the explosion immediately followed. The French population rose as one man; and, in December, 1837, the news arrived in London that Canada was in a state of rebellion.

The government insisted that means of redress had been afforded by the sending out, in 1835, of Lord Gosford, with

¹ Hansard, xxxvi. p. 1304; xxxvii. p. 1290.

commissioners, to inquire into the grievances of the Canadians; but that commission had made matters worse, instead ^{Gosford Com-}mission. of better, by baulking the hopes of the people, — by promising great things, and hinting of liberal instructions, which came to nothing but causing imputations of deception, if not of treachery, against Lord Glenelg, the colonial Minister. Lord Gosford now, on the breaking out of the rebellion, came home, resigning the government into the hands of Sir J. Colborne, as a military governor, best suited to the exigency of the time. Here, then, was the state of things: the Governor and his Council in close union with each other, and in hopeless hostility to the popular branch of the Legislature; the Legislature retaliating its wrongs, and seeking redress, by refusing the official salaries, and demanding from the imperial government a necessary amendment of the constitution; and the imperial government refusing the amendment, and merely proposing to improve the quality of the obnoxious Council, without touching its principle. Such was the state of affairs in Lower Canada. In the Upper Province it was much the same; only, instead of a parliamentary refusal of the popular demand, the same end was gained by the putting forth of such government patronage as made the Assembly its own, — a temporary and most dangerous device of procrastination.¹ The numbers in the Legislature had before been forty Reformers and twenty Tories; after the elections of June, 1836, when the Governor put forth all his power and patronage, the numbers were forty-one Tories to twenty Reformers, — a change which, occurring in a time of vehement popular discontent, tells its own tale.

In this state of affairs, what the ministers did was to propose to Parliament a suspension of the constitution of Lower Canada. They had suspended the constitu- ^{Constitution of Lower Canada suspended, 1838.} tion before, in the preceding April, by taking the disposal of their funds out of the hands of the Assembly. This was all they had done: and now they were for suspending more of the constitution, when some of the wisest people of every political party in the country considered the cause of the Canadians to be just; their demands such as could not be trifled with; and even the war they were now levying to be defensible as regarded England, though unjustifiable as regarded the neighbors of the insurgents, from its hopelessness and unprepared character. When, in such a state of things, a member of the house of Russell stood forth, as a Minister of the Crown, to coerce instead of aiding the injured, — to call that treason in them which he lauded as patriotism in analogous instances, the thorough Reformers in Parliament and the country felt that it

¹ London and Westminster Review, viii. p. 480.

was time to part company with the nominal Reformers who had been practising a Stuart policy, and were now taking a Stuart view of affairs. Upon this occasion it was that the organ of the Reformers declared, "The ministers are now understood. The alliance between them and the Radicals is broken, never more to be re-united."

As for the revolt,—it was put down at once, and with little difficulty. In three weeks, all was quiet. It was not long before the friends of good government, and the advocates of the preservation of our colonial dominion, began to be glad that the rebellion had happened, as it had certainly roused the government to a sense that something must be done. The tone of Lord John Russell, who led in the Commons, was hard, prejudiced, despotic; full of the arrogance which those are most apt to parade who have brought on a crisis by ignorance or carelessness.¹ He spoke as if the Canadians were purely wilful and ungrateful, and not at all as if they were suffering under protracted misgovernment which they could not get rectified; but he now saw that something must be done. He had suspended a part of their constitution before, in defiance, and as a punishment; and he suspended the rest now, but it was with a view to something beyond. A full inquiry was to be made into Canadian affairs on the spot, with a view to practical measures. Under the stimulus of rebellion, it was probable that something would be done. Whether something good would be done, must mainly depend on the choice of the man who was sent.

It was on the 16th of January that Lord John Russell told the House of Commons who it was that was to be sent. "I think it is more important," he said, "that the person to be sent from this country should be one whose conduct and character should be beyond exception,—a person conversant, not solely with matters of administration, but with the most important affairs which are from time to time brought before the Parliament of this country."² I think he should be conversant also with the affairs of the various States of Europe; and, moreover, that it should be implied by his nomination that he was not at all adverse to opinions the most liberal, and that he was favorable to popular feelings and popular rights. Having said this much, I know not why I should refrain from adding, that Her Majesty has been pleased to intrust the conduct of this affair and these high powers to one whom her advisers think in every respect fitted for the charge; namely, the Earl of Durham." Lord Durham felt "inexpressible reluctance" to the charge. His health was not good; and no post ever filled by any man more absolutely required the

Lord High-commissioner and Governor-general.

¹ Hansard, xl. p. 7-42.

² Hansard, xl. p. 38.

unflinching energy and strong capacity for labor which cannot be permanently commanded in a state of uncertain health. With his well-known pride of family and high spirit, there was united a genuine modesty, which prevented his ever overrating his own powers, and a good sense which disclosed to him all the real difficulties of any task which he undertook. It was no wonder, therefore, that he went reluctantly into a work like this,—so critical, so arduous, so incalculably important. The work was nothing less than re-organizing society in Canada, and mainly determining the colonial relations of England for all time to come. His spirit warmed as he dwelt upon the significance of the effort he was now to make; and, before he left England, he was able to preach a cheerful faith to some who saw but too much to apprehend for him. It is very affecting now to read his appeal to friends and foes, on the announcement to the Lords of his acceptance of the mission,—an appeal which it must be more than affecting to both friends and foes to remember now. “I feel,” he said, “that I can accomplish it only by the cordial and energetic support—a support which I am sure I shall obtain—of my noble friends, the members of Her Majesty’s Cabinet, by the co-operation of the Imperial Parliament, and, permit me to say, by the generous forbearance of the noble Lords opposite, to whom I have always been politically opposed.”¹ He alluded to the “candor and generosity” of the Duke of Wellington, and on these he knew he might rely; but, as for “cordial and energetic support” from his friends in the Cabinet, and “generous forbearance” from some one who sat opposite, it was more worthy of his confiding temper to depend upon them, than consistent with their conduct in political affairs to grant them.

Lord Durham’s appointment was twofold. He went out as Governor-general of the five British colonies in North America, and also as Lord High-commissioner, to inquire into, and if possible adjust, all questions about civil government pending in Upper and Lower Canada. His powers were understood to be unlimited; and that of granting a general amnesty, ^{His powers.} being expressly mentioned by ministers in Parliament, was eagerly discussed in Canada, from the first moment that the news could arrive. By a letter from the Colonial Secretary, dated April 21, Lord Durham was informed that Her Majesty’s government were anxious above every thing that the prisoners concerned in the insurrection, who could not be tried in the ordinary courts of law because it was certain that juries would not convict, should be treated with the utmost possible lenity compatible with the public safety; and, to secure the immediate settlement of the question

¹ Hansard, xl. p. 242.

which the whole government saw to be "by far the most difficult and dangerous,"—that of the disposal of the prisoners,—the unusual power was given to Lord Durham to bestow absolute pardon, in treason cases as in others, without waiting for the ascertainment of the royal pleasure.¹ When these powers were bestowed, and sympathy and cordial support promised, no doubt the ministers meant what they said. They were as little able as others to imagine how soon they could be scared into desertion and betrayal of the comrade whom they had entreated to undertake "the most difficult and dangerous" part of their business.

Before he sailed, Lord Durham had warning how much he had to expect from the "generous forbearance" of political opponents. Owing to some unfortunate delays in the going forth of the expedition, time was given for factious opponents to find means of annoyance. Ridicule was cast on Lord Durham's preparations,—even to the packing of his plate, and the number of his grooms; and jocose warning was conveyed to relatives of gentlemen going out, that the ship-of-war, the "Hastings," would be sunk by the weight of the Governor-general's plate; and so much noise did this nonsense make, that the Marquis of Chandos nearly succeeded in throwing over the whole enterprise, by moving an objection to the expense,—the Governor-general being himself unsalaried.² A serious mistake, made by Lord Durham and the ministers, afforded advantage to their enemies, both now and hereafter. Two objectionable persons—convicted of crime, one in a court of justice, and the other at the bar of the Lords, some years before—went out with the expedition; one with an appointment, and the other without, but with a full understanding that he was to be employed for the purposes of the mission. The ministers acquiesced in Mr. Turton's appointment, before Lord Durham's departure, though they were afterwards forward in censuring him for it. The appointment was, in truth, a bad one; and no eminence of legal ability should have been allowed to cancel the moral disability.

The voyage was long; and its leisure was employed by the Governor-general and his official companions in diligent study of Canadian questions, and in discussions on the mass of papers relating to those questions that they had brought from the colonial office. The Quebec papers which were sent on board at the mouth of the St. Lawrence contained bad news. There were faction and fury in the towns, and an outcry against any despotic Governor-general: the French population were believed to be planning mischief; and the American "sympathizers" on the borders were giving more and more trouble. The first step was to prepare a proclamation, which was done on board.

¹ Annual Register, 1838, p. 255.

² Hansard, xlii. p. 422.

The next was so characteristic as to be worth mentioning. It was the custom, on the arrival of a new governor, to swear in the old Executive Council. Lord Durham did not intend to do this, being aware of the thoroughly party character, and therefore present helplessness, of the late Executive Council; but the thing was very nearly done by an audacious attempt of the clerk of the Council to surprise Lord Durham into swearing in the old members. To break up the notion that office in the Council was for life, Lord Durham selected a few quiet new members, with whom he joined his three secretaries.

When he landed, — on the 29th of May, 1838, — the British received him with eagerness, expecting from his hand the annihilation of the French party. • The French were dumb and disaffected, sullenly withholding their confidence from their own priests, because the priests were well affected to the government. The late official body was quite odious and helpless. Upper Canada was in a most alarming state. Sir Francis Head, the Governor, and others, had cruelly insulted the Americans; the American “sympathizers” retaliated by attacking steamboats, and keeping up a small war along the borders, which the government at Washington was wholly unable to control. From the bad state of municipal arrangements, the towns were in a barbarous condition as to police, paving, and lighting; and nothing could be worse than the state of public feeling about the administration of justice, both on a large and a small scale. From radical faults in the method of selling crown-lands, insuperable impediments existed to the proper settling of the country, and the distribution of emigrants westwards; a mischief as fatal to the prosperity of the colony as its political troubles. The canals, indispensable for commerce, which would otherwise find its way through the United States, were left unfinished; and no representations made to government at home about the necessity of completing them obtained any attention. Some of the old tenures of land were vexatious and detrimental, and there was no registration of land. Education was in a backward state; though, among the French population, virtuous efforts had been made for the instruction of their children. What the spirit of rancor was between the two races and political parties, there is no need to repeat.

Such was the state of things when Lord Durham landed at Quebec, on the 29th of May. Within a few weeks there was a great change. It used to be said of Lord Durham, in his foreign missions, that a week or so was spent first in making potentates understand that he meant exactly what he said, and nothing else; and that from that time business proceeded rapidly, smoothly, and safely. He used the same frank-

ness now, and so did his coadjutors; and it was understood by everybody but the government at home. Colonel Grey went to Washington; and immediately all was well there. All danger of war was presently over; and the British and American forces were co-operating on the frontier. The French population, thus deprived of hope from the borderers, settled down in a kind of sullen resignation, and left off plotting rebellion. The British were annoyed that the French were kindly treated, and their loyalty became of a soberer kind. In Upper Canada, Lord Durham persuaded Sir George Arthur to give up all his plans of hanging rebels, and to publish a general amnesty; by which minds were set at rest. Before June was out, provision was made for paving and lighting, and furnishing a good police to Quebec and Montreal. By means of a land-commission, a path was opened to colonists, and the most abundant of all sources of colonial prosperity was freely opened up. A good court of appeal was constituted of the judges, with two additional members. By imperial act, the new Executive Council was made the supreme appellate tribunal. A registry of land-titles was instituted, and a commutation of the feudal tenures of Montreal provided for, as a beginning of a general commutation. An education commission saw its way to the establishment of a general system of education by which the adverse races might be united in schools and colleges, so that in another generation their present animosity might have become a tradition.

These were not small things to have done in the course of a few weeks; but there were two affairs — one more immediately embarrassing, the other more eminently important, than any of these — which still more deeply engaged the minds of the

Scheme of
federal Union
of colonies.

Governor-general and his coadjutors. The permanently important subject was the scheme of constituting a federal union of the British North American Provinces, for the two objects of securing good government for these colonies themselves, and of providing a counterbalance to the increasing power of the United States in the Western hemisphere. This scheme appears to be one of those whose fulfilment is only a question of time. It has been suggested and resuggested by statesmen, from Mr. Fox downwards, — if not from an earlier date still. Mr. Roebuck introduced it, formally and completely, in the House of Commons, in April, 1837; and Sir R. Peel, Lord Howick, Mr. Ellice, and others, declared their approval of it.¹ Lord Durham began immediately to inquire and act, — conceiving that no surer means of securing peace in the colonies could be found than uniting their legislation in matters of common interest to them all, — such as the conduct of their defence

¹ Hansard, xxxvii. p. 1209.

in time of war, post-office and currency matters, and others, — while their local affairs were ruled by a Legislature in each colony.¹ Sir Charles Grey, who had been one of Lord Gosford's commissioners, had proposed to divide the Canadas into three provinces, with their respective Parliaments; by which plan he believed the adverse races would be so separated as to cease to annoy each other, while their representatives might meet in a central Parliament, to legislate upon the navigation of the St. Lawrence, their commercial duties, their monetary system, their railroads, canals, and internal communications. Lord Durham was disposed in favor of the large federal system, and of also dividing the Canadas into three provinces, — the westernmost of which would be exclusively British; the easternmost French, of a very quiet sort; and the intermediate one containing both populations, but the French in a small minority. The numbers in the two Canadas were at that time 950,000; of which 620,000 were British, and 330,000 were French. By some means or other, the process must be renewed by which the French had been fast becoming British, when the Act of 1791 separated the races again; and the present scheme appeared the most promising, by its operation in concentrating powers and swamping dissensions, while it left laws and customs untouched. Lord Durham requested that the colonies under his government would send able persons to Quebec to discuss this subject with his Council. On the 12th of September, some gentlemen arrived from Nova Scotia and Prince-Edward Island; and others soon followed from New Brunswick. These gentlemen were well chosen, — intelligent, enlightened, and seriously disposed in favor of the scheme. But events were happening which put an end to their deliberations.

The other affair was that which Lord Durham and the ministers had agreed beforehand was "by far the most difficult and dangerous," — the disposal of the rebel prisoners. Their fate ought to have been decided by Sir J. Colborne, and not left to be an insuperable embarrassment to the Governor-general. But the thing had not been done; and it must be done now. It was a subject of deep thought and long deliberation. The case was this. The rebellion had been put down long ago; and it was universally understood that its outbreak was by a sort of accident, though its spread was but too well prepared for by the violence of previous agitation. The jails were full; and the choice of a method of clearing them was rendered infinitely more difficult by delay. To have military tribunals now was out of the question, after such a lapse of time, and in the state of men's minds; and the civil tribunals could not

Disposal of
the pris-
oners.

¹ General Report, pp. 64, 65.

have acted. Convictions could not have been obtained but by a packing of the juries by government,—a course not to be thought of. Two members of the Council suggested to Lord Durham to punish a few leaders lightly, but steadily, by means of an *ex post facto* law, made to meet the case. Lord Durham foresaw the outcry that would be made; and declared that he would not think of it on any grounds less broad than the wish of the leading loyalists, and the petition of the prisoners themselves. The leading men among the British made known their approval; and we have the petition of eight rebel leaders, dated from Montreal Jail, June 25, 1838, in which they exhibit their own view of the course which would be best for the peace of the country. “We professed our willingness to plead guilty,” they say, “whereby to avoid the necessity of a trial, and to give, as far as is in our power, tranquillity to the country.¹ . . . We again place ourselves at your Lordship’s discretion, and pray that the peace of the country may not be endangered by a trial.” Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Paget was at Quebec at the time; and with him the plan was discussed and agreed upon.

On the day of the Queen’s coronation, the 28th of June, an ordinance appeared, which declared that the eight rebel leaders in the jail of Montreal had acknowledged their guilt, and submitted themselves to Her Majesty’s pleasure; that sixteen others, who were named, had fled; that it was hereby enacted, that the eight before-named culprits should be transported to Bermuda, to undergo there such restraints as should be thought fit; and that any of either class of culprits who should return and be found in the province without permission, should suffer death.² It was to be in the power of any governor to permit any or all of these persons to return. Another clause excepted from mercy persons concerned in two murders connected with the rebellion. With this ordinance was published a proclamation of amnesty for all political offences, for all persons but those designated in the ordinance.

The success of this measure was complete and immediate. Except that some of the British at Quebec were offended at its leniency, there was nothing but exultation on every hand. It produced a strong impression in the United States; and its instant effect in settling minds, and restoring social confidence in Canada, was very striking. None were better pleased than the prisoners themselves,—as might have been expected. Lord Durham had fears throughout that censure would arise at home; but these fears

were dissolved, as soon as the mails could cross and recross the Atlantic, by the arrival of a despatch from the colonial Minister, and an autograph letter from the Queen,

¹ Annual Register, 1838, p. 273.

² Annual Register, 1838, Append. 304.

approving of the ordinance and proclamation in the strongest terms.

The worst seemed now over; the past appeared done with, and the way clear for the completion of the reforms in progress. Lord Durham's health, never good, was somewhat impaired by toil and anxiety; but he was now cheered, and had no doubt of finishing his great work. But the past was not done with; for he had omitted to send home to the government a statement full enough to produce in Parliament, to meet the questionings and cavils of the uninformed and hostile. The ministers knew enough for their own satisfaction; and he relied on their pledges of cordial support, and on their consciousness of his ample powers, — given by themselves; but he ought to have furnished them with such complete documentary exhibitions of the case as would have made them as strong with Parliament as he believed himself to be with them. He did not; and it was a fatal omission. Some other matters had not gone smoothly. Lord Melbourne, with all his nonchalance and gayety, had not spirit, activity, and courage to stand by an absent friend under attack in the House of Lords; and especially when the attack came from Lord Brougham, who now had power at any time to unnerve him. All the ministers were aware of Mr. Turton's intended appointment before he sailed; yet Lord Melbourne gave it up to censure, as if it were a fact new to him, when questioned upon it, on the 2d of July, by Lord Wharnccliffe.¹ Lord Durham did not conceal his feelings on this incident, when he next wrote home. Another attack was made in the Lower House, when Sir Edward Sugden objected to the small number of the Governor-general's Council; and, on this occasion, the arrangement was quietly vindicated by Lord John Russell and the Attorney-general.² The great attack was made on the 7th of August, by Lord Brougham, who not only offered objections which every member of the Legislature had a perfect right, and might consider it his duty, to offer, but pursued his supposed rival in a manner mournful and surprising even to those who knew his temper, and the antecedent circumstances.³ About the illegality of that part of the ordinance which declared the culprits liable to death-punishment if they returned without leave, there was a widely existing doubt, — no trial having taken place; but Lord Brougham also denied that the principal of the eight prisoners had ever acknowledged himself guilty; he set forth a different policy for Canada as the one which he avouched to be right; and he brought in a Bill to declare the meaning of the Canada Act, under which Lord

Attacks by
opposition.

Lord
Brougham's
Declaratory
Bill.

¹ Hansard, xliii. p. 1167.

² Hansard, xliv. p. 820.

³ Hansard, xliv. p. 1019.

Durham went out, — proposing therein large limitations of the powers of the Governor-general, and offering to indemnify, by Act of Parliament, all persons concerned in the issue of the ordinance of the 28th of June. Lord Brougham's own Bill contained errors which exposed him to some retort; as when it declared the ordinance to be "so much for the service of the public, that it ought to be justified by Act of Parliament;" while, in the same breath, Lord Brougham was vehement about its gross and intolerable injustice. The declaration in the Bill was vindication enough of the ordinance in a moral point of view, as Lord Glenelg declared: and he avowed his intention of supporting the ordinance as legal in all its parts but one, — meeting the consequences of that one, by instructing the governor of Bermuda not to detain the prisoners if they should choose to depart; which every one knew they would be careful not to attempt.¹ Lord Glenelg also pointed out the novelty, in Lord Brougham's Bill, of proposing indemnity for a current transaction, — that is, for acts future as well as finished. All the generous-minded men, of any politics, were of one mind about the temper shown in the treatment of Lord Durham, and the studious forgetfulness of the singular exigency of his position. Such men felt, that, after having given Lord Durham powers almost unlimited for the management of a crisis almost unequalled, and encouraged him to rely on their "cordial support," or "generous forbearance," as the case might be, it could not be right to pass now — in regard to his very first act of mercy — a Bill called declaratory, but which should materially limit the powers they had so lately conferred. Such men were for rectifying the one supposed illegality of the ordinance, while supporting its intent, and upholding, wherever it was possible, the authority of the Governor-general, till the organization of Canadian affairs should preclude all doubts as to the field of action for rulers, and release them from the present urgent necessity of support from home. But, if the ministers fully understood the case, they did not show that they did. They could not, unfortunately, interest Parliament by the production of any documentary narrative or reasoning from the Canadian Government; and Lord Brougham's opposition was more than they had courage to stand. Though Lord Melbourne declared, Ministers succumb. on the 9th of August, that the House was suffering from the narrowing of the mind caused by the pursuit of the legal profession, and that if the Canadas were now lost, through the discrediting and fettering of those who should protect them, it would be by special pleading, he gave way in twenty-four hours.² The second reading of Lord Brougham's Bill was carried by a majority of 54 to 36. After this, all was in con-

¹ Hansard, xliv. p. 1073.

² Hansard, xliv. p. 1096.

fusion. Lord Denman was disposed to believe that Lord Durham had the power of transporting the prisoners to the Bermudas, though everybody else had given up that point. It came out that Sir J. Colborne had passed ordinances of attainder more stringent than Lord Durham's, without any question from any quarter; and Lord Brougham now refused to declare whether he thought Sir J. Colborne had transcended his powers.¹ Lord Brougham's Bill was stripped of all its declaratory portions, and reduced to a mere enacting of indemnity; to which again Lord Denman objected, on the part of the prisoners, as a gross violation of the constitution. Amidst this confusion, absurd if it had not been about a matter so serious, the only party whose views and facts were not fully explained was Lord Durham. He and his position were sacrificed, while nothing was established.

On the 10th of August, Lord Melbourne announced that the Queen's advisers had counselled the disallowance of the ordinance. "I cannot but say," he declared, "that it is with the deepest regret and alarm that I have taken this course."² I cannot but say that it is not without great apprehensions of the consequences that I have taken this course; and it is not without feeling the greatest pain and regret that I have come to the determination." In the Commons, the debates on the subject were animated, and sometimes angry; and the ministers appeared even more weak than in the Lords. On Sir Charles Grey declaring, that, while he disapproved of the ordinance in general, he was convinced of the legality of the provision for the transportation to Bermuda, Dr. Lushington observed that Lord Durham might have gone further astray if he had had more legal advice, since the Lord-chancellor, the Lord Chief-justice, Ex-chancellor Sugden, Sir William Follett, and Sir Charles Grey, all differed from one another as to the legality of his acts.³ It was now, however, too late to reconsider the matter. The pledge was given to disallow the ordinance; and it was done in such a hurry that the amnesty-provision was not remembered; and it must now include all the parties named as excepted in the ordinance. The step which Lord Durham was compelled instantly to take in consequence of this was converted into another charge against him, as will be seen. As Lord Glenelg had emphatically approved the ordinance, in a despatch to the Governor-general, it was thought necessary that he should retire when the annulling was decreed. He was got rid of, and was succeeded, as colonial Secretary, in February, 1839, by Lord Normanby.

Confused
result.

Disallowance
of the
ordinance.

Retirement
of Lord
Glenelg.

¹ Hansard, xliv. p. 1138.

² Hansard, xliv. p. 1129.

³ Hansard, xliv. p. 1301.

It was on a fine September day, on returning from a merry drive, that Lord Durham and his family and advisers received the news of the disallowance of the ordinance. His friend and best helper, Mr. Charles Buller, knew before dinner, — knew by his countenance more than by words, that all was over, — that their great enterprise was ruined. When they sat down in consultation, that adviser and friend would fain have persuaded himself and others that all was not over. That this was the result of an intrigue was to them clear. The ministers and Lord Durham had a deadly enemy, who had given notice of what they might expect when he declared that he “hurled defiance” at Lord Melbourne’s head; and Lord Melbourne and his comrades dared not withstand this enemy, even while the first lawyers in the empire disagreed as to whether the ordinance of Lord Durham was legal or illegal. What Sir J. Colborne had done was approved or passed over; and when, in a most critical difficulty which Sir J. Colborne should never have thrown upon him, Lord Durham used powers which Sir J. Colborne had used without question, his watchful enemy seized his opportunity to scare his friends from supporting him, as they were pledged to do. Considering all this, and that Lord Durham was to blame in not having furnished the government at home with sufficient documentary material for his defence, Mr. Charles Buller earnestly desired to hold out, for the high prize of success in retrieving the colony, and forming a new and sound colonial system. But he soon saw that Lord Durham was right in proposing to return. The Governor-general had not health for such a struggle as this must now have been. Energy and decision were not always to be commanded in the degree necessary under such unequalled difficulties; and death in the midst of the work was only too probable. Again, the colony was still in too restive and unsettled a state to be governed by an enfeebled hand; and, while unsupported at home, Lord Durham was a less safe ruler than Sir J. Colborne, whom he would leave in his place. Again, it was now clear that the true battle-field on behalf of Canada was in Parliament. With his present knowledge in his head, and his matured schemes in his hand, Lord Durham could do more for Canada in the House of Lords than he could do at Quebec, while the Lords made nightly attacks which drew rebuke even from the Duke of Wellington, and thwarted the policy which they did not understand. Thus, resignation was an act of sad and stern necessity; but, if not so, it was an act of clear fidelity to Canada. It was hastened by rumors of intended insurrection, which, under the circumstances, could be dealt with only by Sir J. Colborne.

And now again came the question, What was to be done with

Reception of
the news
in Canada.

Necessity of
resignation.

the prisoners? The case was at present this. They would return on Lord Durham's resignation. Were they to be tried or not? Having been already more or less punished, were they to be punished over again? The violent loyalists would have arrested them; and then would have ensued the very evils, with aggravation, that the ordinance was designed to obviate. The guilt would have been proved; and acquittal would have followed, in the face of the evidence. There must have been — to avoid such a spectacle as this — a suspension of the habeas corpus, or packed juries, or martial law; and, if Lord Durham would not introduce such measures for the punishment of the rebels at an earlier date, he would not do it now, to repunish a few of them long after the rebellion had ceased. These men were as yet feeble and insignificant, — the few against whom there was a sufficiency of evidence; but they would become abundantly formidable if it could once be said in the United States, and around their own homes, that they were persecuted by the British Government. This would be made the pretext of the rebellion then brewing; which might otherwise be easily dealt with from its want of pretext. There was also no time to be lost; for the men might now arrive any day. Lord Durham was therefore advised to meet the difficulty half-way, — to speak the first word, — and to do it by inserting in his needful proclamation a declaration that there was now nothing to prevent the return of the prisoners. Lord Durham himself observed, that this would be regarded at home as a freak of temper; but his counsel encouraged him to brave the imputation, and trust to the facts becoming understood in time. The act *was* called a freak of temper; and so was his determination to return; and so was his proclamation, — which is considered by impartial observers one of the finest papers of its kind that our history can show.¹ It was not a case in which there could be any concealment or shuffling. To enlist the colonists on the side of obedience and order, it was necessary to tell them simply why he must leave them, — why the rebels whom he had punished were released by the home government, — and how it was that the plans for the welfare of the colony were suddenly stopped. It was necessary, for the same purpose, to keep up their hope and trust in government, — to show them that all might yet be well if he went home to explain their case, — to lead them to rely on him still, as resolved in their cause. The proclamation was issued on the 9th of October; and its immediate effect was to soften the grief and wrath of the colony at losing him, — to allay excessive agitation, and to prove that he had not miscalculated the resources of the colony, by bringing forward volunteers, in fresh confidence, for the defence of the province.

¹ Annual Register, 1838, Appendix, p. 311.

He did what he could to obviate to the colony the mischief done by friends and foes at home; and he did so much that he must ever be regarded as the originator of good government in the colonies. Rarely has a greater work been done in five months, than the actual reforms he wrought in Canada; but he did much more by means of the report which he delivered after

his return. By means of this celebrated report, free

Report. and large principles of colonial government are exhibited in action, and endowed with so communicable a character that there are none of our more thriving colonies that do not owe much of their special prosperity to him; and probably few of the least happy that would not have been in a worse condition if he had not gone to Canada. By the utmost diligence in the completion of his measures during the few weeks that remained,—by every effort of self-control, and by the quiet operation of his magnanimity,—he averted as much as he could of the mischief done at home; but one fatal consequence was beyond his power. His heart was broken. No malice, no indifference, no levity, can get rid of that fact; and it is one which should not be hidden.

He held to his work to the last. On the night before his departure, a proclamation settled the rights of squatters on

Return of the commission. Crown-lands. As he went down to the harbor, crowds stretched as far as the eye could see,—every head uncovered, and not a sound but of the carriages.

This deep silence of sympathy moved him strongly: and he believed that this was his last sight of an assemblage of men; for he had no idea that he could reach England alive. As the frigate—the “Inconstant”—was slowly towed out of harbor, heavy snow-clouds seemed to sink and settle upon her, while over the water came the sound of the cannon which installed his successor. Those of his Council who remained behind to clear off arrears of business, were alarmed, during their sad and silent dinner, by a report of fire on board the frigate; and a fire there was, but it was presently extinguished. There was no intermission of storms up to the moment of the landing at Plymouth, on the 1st of December. While the ship was in harbor there, the weather was so boisterous that there was difficulty to the Queen’s

The landing. messengers in finding any sea-goers who would undertake to convey on board the “Inconstant” the packet of orders to land Lord Durham without the honors. It was done by a boat being allowed to drive so that the packet could be thrown on board. He met honors in abundance, however, on his

Reception. landing, and all the way to London,—crowded public meetings, addresses, escorts,—every token of confidence and attachment that could cheer his heart. There was

great joy throughout the Liberal party when his first words at the Devonport meeting were known.¹ They referred to his "declarations to the people of Scotland in 1834," as his present creed. But he disappointed the Liberals by his magnanimous determination to devote himself to the retrieval of Canada, and to listen to nothing else till that was effected.

Lady Durham, immediately on her return, resigned her situation in the Queen's household. Great efforts were made to bring about a reconciliation between Lord Durham and the Whig government; and his generosity aided the attempt. He could afford to do it; for he had never spoken evil of his enemies. Nothing had throughout been more touching to those who knew him than his slowness to give up hope in Lord Brougham, and his quickness in seizing on favorable explanations of doubtful conduct. He now required of his friends silence in both Houses about his quarrel; and he kept silence himself.² While the newspapers of all parties were commenting on the weakness of the Whigs, and declaring that they could not remain in power "beyond Easter at furthest,"—a curious hit as to date,—Lord Durham devoted himself only the more to the support of a ministry which, with all its sins and weaknesses, professed a liberal policy. He was soon joined by his coadjutors from Canada; and they worked together at the celebrated report. There was more cavil about small circumstances on the publication of the report,—worthy of mention only as showing how he was betrayed when he relied on the "cordial support" of friends, and the "generous forbearance" of opponents. Much of his time and labor was devoted to the instruction of his successor, Mr. C. Poulett Thomson (afterwards Lord Sydenham), who wisely resolved to adopt the Durham policy with the utmost completeness. Many hours every day were spent in consultation, and preparation of measures; and to good purpose. Not only were Lord Durham's plans all adopted by Lord Sydenham, but his own best measures were planned in Lord Durham's house in London, prepared for introduction in Canada, and the agents informed and instructed. These duties done, but few months of life remained to the baffled statesman. When he could give information about Canadian matters, or vindicate the principles of good government at home or in the colonies, he was at his post in the House of Lords. But he was visibly sinking. In the summer of 1840, he was ordered to the south of Europe for his health; but lie

Lord Durham's decline.

¹ Spectator, 1838, p. 1159.

² It will be evident to the readers of this chapter, that it is written from private knowledge, as well as from public documents. After the above notice of

Lord Durham's generous silence, it is hardly necessary to say that no statement of the circumstances of his Canada mission was ever made to me by himself or any of his family.

found himself so ill at Dover that he turned aside to Cowes, where he became too weak to leave his couch. Even then, and when he was unable to take any nourishment but a little fruit, there was so much life and animation in his countenance and conversation, that those who knew him best could not but believe

His death.

that much work yet lay between him and the grave; but on the 28th of July he sank rapidly, and died in a few hours. He left his large estates and other property as much as possible at the disposal of his devoted wife,—the eldest daughter of Earl Grey; but she followed him in a few months, leaving their young son to emulate the virtues of his parents as well as he might after the spectacle of their example was withdrawn.¹

Thus were the Liberal party in Great Britain deprived of the statesman whom they had hoped to make their head. It may be questioned whether his health or his temperament would have ever permitted him to hold a post in the Cabinet for any length of time. He could not, under Lord Grey's premiership; but the shortcomings of that Administration are quite enough to account for his secession. The halting Reformers were no comrades for him; and his directness, frankness, faith, and courage were altogether overpowering to them. Magnanimous as his nature was, he had faults of temper which excused some dislike and some ridicule, though that fault was much exaggerated by those who, being able to establish no other charge against him, made the most of that. He had much to bear from the loss of children, and his infirm health; but he never was wanting to the discharge of public duty. From the moment when the young John George Lambton fixed the attention of the best opposition men by his maiden speech, to that in which he provided for the establishment of responsible government in Canada, he was the trust and hope of the most highly principled Liberals in the country. He had good working ability,—a clear head, an unprejudiced mind, a ceaseless desire to learn of all who had any thing to tell, and a most conscientious industry. It has been said that he had a genius for truth; and so he had,—both for the perception and the expression of it. He thought nothing of his own power of public speaking; but some of the best lawyers and literary people in England liked it as well as any election-mob that he ever addressed. He died at the age of forty-eight, and left no political successor. If the advent of the Conservatives was before believed to be near, it became pretty certain from the time of Lord Durham's death. There was no longer any thing in connection with the Whig Administration worth contending for. Lord Durham had upheld it, and thereby

¹ Annual Register, 1840, Chron. 173.

enjoined the same conduct on his friends; but when he was gone, no further effort was possible, and the Melbourne Ministry remained dependent on the mere favor of the Queen.

It has been mentioned that Mr. Charles Buller was the nearest friend and adviser of Lord Durham in his Canadian enterprise. He was his chief-secretary, and a member Mr. Charles Buller. of his Council; and it is understood that the merit of the celebrated report is mainly ascribable to him. He was before a remarkable member of the House of Commons,—remarkable for high political promise, and for a manly amiability which engaged the friendly regard of every man within the four walls. He was one of the leaders of the Radical-reform party; but this did not render him an object of suspicion or dislike to the rankest Tory in the House,—any more than his overflowing wit made him feared or avoided. He was but thirty-two when he finished his work at the Canadian report; and every one hoped and supposed that a long course of usefulness and honor lay before him. But in ten years he also was gone, after having risen much in the appreciation of those who knew him most and least. In the words of one who knew and has described him well,¹ “To a singular extent, it can be said of him that he was a spontaneous, clear man. Very gentle, too, though full of fire; simple, brave, graceful. What he did and what he said came from him as light from a luminous body; and had thus always in it a high and rare merit, which any of the more discerning could appreciate fully. To many, for a long while, Mr. Buller passed merely for a man of wit; and certainly his beautiful natural gayety of character, which by no means meant levity, was commonly thought to mean it, and did, for many years, hinder the recognition of his higher intrinsic qualities. Slowly it began to be discovered, that, under all this many-colored radiancy and coruscation, there burned a most steady light,—a sound, penetrating intellect, full of adroit resources, and loyal by nature itself to all that was methodic, manful, true; in brief, a mildly resolute, chivalrous, and gallant character, capable of doing much serious service.”

When these men and their coadjutors were turned back from their “serious service” in Canada, the work did not Lord Sydenham. stop. Their successors — Lord Sydenham and his coadjutors — applied themselves with diligence and devotedness to carry out their policy and their projects. Lord Sydenham’s health was no better than his predecessor’s, and he died within two years of his arrival in Canada; but in that brief time, and under that disability, he had done more than most men would in many years.

¹ Carlyle in the “London Examiner.”

Mr. C. Poulett Thomson, as he still was, went out with the leading points of his mission well fixed in his mind,—that the ^{Responsible} minority was no longer to govern; that the Executive ^{government.} and the Assembly were to be brought into harmony, in accordance with what are considered the first principles of government at home, and with what was called responsible government in Canada; and that such improvements as he contemplated, must be made, not by means of organic changes in the constitution, but by administering the powers of the government in a just and liberal spirit, so as to attract the sympathies of all to the Executive. He wished to do in Canada what Lord Normanby and his coadjutors had attempted in Ireland; and it remained to be seen how much resemblance there was between the “Family Compact” in Canada and the “Protestants” in Ireland,—between the “French” in Canada and the Catholics in Ireland. By his earliest declarations after his arrival in different colonies, it was seen that he held two points of doctrine in regard to his own conduct,¹—that, as the representative of the sovereign, he was responsible to the imperial authorities alone; and that his first obligation was so to form and conduct his government as to insure its harmony with the majority of the House of Assembly. The question was whether the doctrine was practicable. The proof must be the work of many years, and must include the trial of many governors. In his own short day, he did what he could. He had the inestimable advantage which was denied to his predecessor in the most critical moment of his probation,—support from the government at home. The new Colonial Secretary, Lord J. Russell, was a sort of idol of his, and afforded him a full requital of support. He had no personal enemy in the House of Lords to scare his friends into desertion. He had every advantage; and he used his advantages well.

His chief aim was the legislative re-union of the two provinces; in order to undo, if possible, some of the mischief ^{Union of} of their division, and promote the process of Anglicizing ^{the Canadas.} the French. This project he announced in his speech to the Legislature, at the end of 1839; and he witnessed the accomplishment of it in little more than a year. The legislative union of the two Canadas was proclaimed on the 10th of February, 1841,—the Queen’s first wedding-day, and the anniversary also of the conclusion of the treaty of 1763, which made Canada a British colony; and also of an act which it was less conciliatory to remember,—the royal assent to the suspension of the constitution of Lower Canada.² It needs not be said that the union was unacceptable to the French population. They struggled hard to return representatives who were opposed to the project; and

¹ Life of Lord Sydenham, p. 273.

² Life of Lord Sydenham, p. 210.

there are still many, on both sides the water, who doubt whether the matter is settled yet. The elections were conducted with much riot and some loss of life, and the first proceedings of the united Legislature were stormy; but, on the whole, matters went better than the Governor expected; and, in a private letter of the 27th of June, a fortnight after the opening, he declared himself at ease in regard to the great experiment.¹ So sanguine was he, that he concluded his letter with the following prophecy in regard to a supposed successor: "Such a man — *not* a soldier, but a statesman — will find no difficulties in his path that he cannot easily surmount; for every thing will be in grooves, running of itself, and only requiring general direction." If this was too much to anticipate, it is certain that the improvements achieved in two years were very remarkable. Men's minds were calmed; credit was re-established; public works were in rapid progress; and confidence in the imperial rule, and hope from the colonial government, had, in a great degree, superseded hatred and fear.

Lord Sydenham's health was too much shaken by disease to permit him to sustain any shock of accident; and he died in September, 1841, from the consequences of his ^{Death of Lord Sydenham.} horse falling with him, — by which his leg was broken. He gave his attention to public affairs to the last, with great calmness and fortitude. His age was only forty-two.

The first association with the name of Mr. C. Poulett Thomson always was, and is still, of a repeal of the corn- ^{His character.} laws. He was the son of a merchant; and no man in England — not Mr. Huskisson himself — ever had a more thorough understanding of the soundness of the principle of free-trade. It was to advocate this principle — and especially in regard to corn — that Mr. Thomson was returned by Manchester as her representative. For a time, he did the duty well; and when he became a member of the Whig Administration, he stipulated for freedom to advocate a repeal of the corn-laws. But this soon grew a cold and formal affair; and we know by an extract from his private journal, written on his voyage to Canada, that he was conscious of having lost ground with the Liberal party, and as a speaker, — in Manchester, and the House of Commons: "Manchester and the House of Commons are no longer what they were to me." His office of Chancellor of the Exchequer was so disagreeable to him, that he would give up the Cabinet and Parliament to avoid it. He was glad to get away to Canada, and do there, by himself, the work that was pressing to be done. He and the political world seem to have been, at that time, in a state of mutual disappointment; and the reason appears to have been that he was not in himself lofty enough for

¹ Life of Lord Sydenham, p. 244.

the position assigned him. He was an able man,—had a clear head, and a strong will, and much knowledge; but there was little morally noble in him but his strength of will,—shown in his industry and his endurance of pain. He did many useful things at the Board of Trade; and he found his most favorable position when he went to Canada: but he neither entertained nor inspired political faith, nor drew towards himself any high respect or genial admiration. Though his last scene of action was his greatest and best, he was regarded, and is still, as one of the Whig failures,—one of the ministers of a critical period, who, while possessed of considerable talents and some good political qualities, have done more than many worse men to shake a nation's faith,—if not in the principles of politics, at least in those who are the most forward in the profession of them. The professions of Whig Reformers, while rehearsing the death-knell of abuses, have but too often reminded us of Dr. Johnson's knocking and summoning ghost; the conclusion in both cases being that — “nothing ensued.” What is due to Mr. C. Poulett Thomson's memory is, that he should be regarded and remembered as Lord Sydenham, who governed Canada for two years on the introduction of Lord Durham; and that, if too much self-regard mingled—as his journal shows—with his inducements to the work, he still bore in mind Lord Spencer's more generous suggestion, that Canada offered “the finest field of exertion for any one, as affording the greatest power of doing the greatest good to one's fellow-creatures.”¹

¹ Life of Lord Sydenham, p. 97.

CHAPTER XIII.

CANADA was not the only British colony which caused embarrassment to the Ministry by hostility between the Legislature and the Executive. The affairs of the nation Jamaica. were brought to a crisis in the spring of 1839, by the doubt whether or not the constitution of Jamaica should be suspended.

It was then, and it will ever be, a matter of grateful surprise, that such an event as the abolition of slavery should have taken place amidst such quietness as prevailed throughout the West Indies. The quietness continued in most of the settlements; and no reasonable person can read the records of the time without emotions of admiration at the temper of the negroes during the critical years which succeeded their emancipation. While their conduct was such as to need no excuse, that of their former masters ought to have every allowance. It is impossible for men — with a few exceptions — who have lived all their lives in the possession of power like that of the slave-owner, to enter at once into a state of fellow-citizenship with their former slaves, and to stand equal with them before the law, with a good The planters. grace. The Jamaica planters were now to decree in their Assembly, and to live under, a whole set of new laws which had never been necessary when all other men in their island had been their property, and not their neighbors; and it was most difficult for them and the imperial government to agree upon those laws. Again, many practices towards their negroes, while still in a state of apprenticeship, which appeared to them necessary and ordinary, could not be allowed under the new system; and the whipping of women, the cruel use of the tread-mill, and many penal usages in prisons, were forbidden by imperial law, which appeared in the eyes of the planters mere favoritism to the negroes, and vexatious interference with themselves. Again, they had been reared in a temper of chartered self-will; and they could not in a moment be expected to feel and show the deference, moderation, and good manners usual among residents under a better social system than theirs. Their conduct was exactly what might have been expected, — that of children in a combative mood. The members of Assembly talked big, did provok-

ing things, snubbed successive governors, used insolent language to the imperial government, endeavored to trench upon the Abolition Act by provisions in Bills of their own, drew upon themselves disallowance of their acts from home, and then refused to provide for the executive wants of the island; and even hustled, and turned out of their House, the officer who came to deliver the Governor's message. After the completion of emancipation, a large proportion of the planters oppressed the patient negroes by arbitrary and illegal exactions of rent, by a misapplication of the vagrant law, and by all those harassing methods which suggest themselves to persons accustomed to despotism as a natural right, and thrown into ill-humor by a deprivation of that power. That such was the conduct of that section of society represented by the Assembly is established by a mass of documentary evidence, and by the testimony of all who went fresh to the scene,—such as the stipendiary magistrates, the Bishop of Jamaica, and observers from various countries travelling in the island.

On the other hand, the governors and other agents of the imperial government could not be expected to preserve an immovable patience,—to resist all provocation to antagonism,—to see, without some emotions of partiality, the oppression of the negroes who were free by law, but not yet in fact,—to hear with perfect composure the scolding which they incurred by encouraging the negro women to decline hard field-work, and by putting the laborers in possession of their own case with regard to wages. It might have been impossible for the officials to avoid collision with the planters; but there were faults on their side as well as on the other,—as is always the case where quarrels exist. In 1836, Lord Sligo, the

Imperial agents. Governor, violated the privileges of the Assembly by sending down a message that he would not pass a Bill unless it were amended as the other House proposed. For this he was rebuked by the home government; and it was necessary for him to apologize to the Assembly. He did this on the 24th of May; but could not, after such a misadventure, remain in his post with any satisfaction: and he was succeeded, in the next autumn, by Sir Lionel Smith.

Sir Lionel Smith. Sir Lionel Smith was popular at first; and, during 1837, affairs proceeded with great smoothness. But the new governor was soon pronounced guilty of favoritism to the negroes, like everybody else who came from the mother-country; and the insolence of the Assembly became more ostentatious than ever. It was prorogued, and then dissolved, under a stubborn refusal on its own part to pass the laws necessary for the transaction of the affairs of the colony. The new Assembly paraded a similar refusal, as soon as it met,—in De-

cember, 1838. The especial cause of wrath at this time was the passage of a Bill in the Imperial Parliament for the regulation of prisons in Jamaica; an act rendered highly necessary by the cruelties which were perpetrated there, under various licenses and pretences which must be put an end to. Another method by which the planters evinced their wrath was by forcible ejections of the negroes from their habitations, by which distress and serious discontent were occasioned. The governor reported to the authorities at home that the laws were not clear in regard to the relations between the employing and the laboring classes, and that a complete new system was required. Under these circumstances, — with local legislation at a stand, and a large section of law requiring absolute renovation, — Lord Melbourne's government determined to propose to Parliament a sus- <sup>Proposed sus-
pension of the
constitution.</sup> pension of the constitution of Jamaica for five years, during which a provisional government would administer its affairs, allowing time for an improvement in the temper of all the parties who were in a state of wrath.

The government miscalculated their strength. It must be a strong government which can carry a suspension of a constitution of 200 years old under any circumstances but those of an armed rebellion, like that of Canada; and Lord Melbourne's government had for some time been the weakest of the <sup>Unpopularity
of Lord Mel-
bourne.</sup> weak. It had lost the support of the Radical-reform party, and was universally understood to be kept in power by the mere favor of the young Queen; and there were circumstances in the demeanor of the Premier which made that favor more conspicuous than it ought to have been. By this time, it had become the custom of newspapers of various politics to record the visits of Lord Melbourne to the palace, and his attendance on the Queen in her drives and at her frequent parties. All reasonable persons saw how natural it was that a sovereign so young and inexperienced in her difficult duties should desire the daily attendance of a Minister so qualified by years and abilities to be her instructor and guide; and how natural it was that a man of so much worldly experience and so kind a heart should be interested in the task of instruction and guidance. But even the most sensible and genial-minded saw how it was also reasonable that the public in general should be discontented at an appearance of pleasure-seeking and idleness in the first Minister of an empire, whose work must be such as ought to leave him little leisure for absence from his office during any but the evening hours, which are all that busy men usually spare for relaxation. It was in the midst of a prevalent desire for a prime-minister who should appear sensible of the responsibility of his position, that the Cabinet brought forward a measure which at

least was very daring, and on which the most conscientious politicians might naturally entertain the gravest doubts.

When Mr. Labouchere brought forward the motion on the 9th of April, 1839, it appeared that, though no one defended the conduct of the Jamaica Assembly, men of all parties saw one way or another by which the dire necessity of suspending the constitution might be avoided.¹ Some were for treating the Assembly as

passionate children, to whom a time for thought and a place for repentance should be permitted. Some hoped that the cure might be naturally effected by means of the enlargement of the constituency of Jamaica, which must take place henceforth through the admission of black citizens to political rights. And there were many who objected to the assignment, in the preamble of the Bill of insufficient grounds, while the real and avowed reason was that the present was a good occasion for that renovation of the institutions of Jamaica which was a necessary consequence, sooner or later, of the great social changes introduced by the emancipation of the negroes. The affair was fully debated. Counsel were heard on behalf of the Assembly; and most able and pertinacious was the pleading. The ministers strained every nerve to carry their measure; but, when the decisive division took place, on the 6th of May, or rather on the morning of the 7th, their majority, in a full House, was only five.²

On the re-assembling of the Houses, the ministers announced their resignation of office. The reason assigned was, that the Assembly of Jamaica would believe that its insolence was countenanced by the British Parliament, and the authority of the Crown would be so much weakened, in that and in other colonies, that Lord Melbourne's Administration could not undertake to govern them. This avowal placed the Melbourne Cabinet in a difficulty on its speedy return to office; but yet it was a fortunate avowal on the whole, for it saved the ministers from the very serious imputations which they deserved to incur, on its now appearing that they had brought their young and confiding sovereign, through her very confidence in them, into a position of great perplexity and humiliation. The time had now come for the fulfilment of the predictions of those who had given early warning about the formation of the Queen's household. The Whig ministers, by surrounding the Queen with their wives, sisters, and daughters, exposed her to be stripped of her accustomed attendants on a change of Ministry, or forced her into an unconstitutional position. They now gave her unconstitutional advice, and upheld her in an unconstitutional position. She was gently dealt with by public opinion in this matter, on

Resignation
of ministers.

Bedchamber
question.

¹ Hansard, xlv. p. 1243.

² Hansard, xlvii. p. 967.

account of her youth and inexperience, and also because she was really the chief sufferer on the occasion; but the universal conviction was, that the ministers had been no true friends to their trusting sovereign. Their enemies concluded, wrongly but not unnaturally, that the whole affair was deliberately planned to give the Whigs a continued hold on office. It was as confuting this charge that Lord John Russell's avowal of inability to govern the colonies, after the late division, was useful to the reputation of the Melbourne Ministry.

It was on the Tuesday night that the resignations were announced.¹ On Wednesday, the 8th of May, at two o'clock, Sir R. Peel waited on the Queen, in answer to her summons. The Queen had sent for the Duke of Wellington in the first instance, and the Duke had told her that the chief difficulties of a Conservative Ministry would lie in the House of Commons; and he therefore advised her to send for Sir R. Peel. The remarkable truthfulness of the Queen's character showed itself at once; a truthfulness which may occasionally annoy or discourage persons who had been accustomed to something different at court, but which is an inestimable security to her ministers by making always firm the ground under their feet. After the intrigue and untruthfulness of George IV., and the vacillating weakness and senile impressibility of William IV., which made their ministers feel the precariousness of the arrangements of every day, there was something so delightful to the Queen's first set of ministers in her steady attachment and perfect ingenuousness, that no one can wonder if their discretion, and even their sense of political honor, were laid asleep. Exactly in the same proportion must the same qualities in the sovereign have been embarrassing to her new ministers on their first approach. As Sir R. Peel avowed to the House, the Queen greeted him with a spontaneous intimation that she was much grieved to part with her late ministers, whose conduct she entirely approved. This was an awkward beginning; but the negotiation proceeded, and no difficulty arose as to the formation of the new Cabinet. Nothing had thus far been said about the constitution of the household; and so little was Sir R. Peel prepared with any complaint or any plan about this, that, as he said, he did not know of what individuals the household was composed, till, having to talk over the matter with his intended colleagues, he referred to the Red-book, and was struck with the completeness of the arrangements for surrounding the Queen with the nearest relations of the Whig ministers.² For instance,—an instance adduced by Sir R. Peel in the House,—the great difficulty of his government was Ireland, the Conservatives being in direct opposition to

Household
appoint-
ments.

¹ Hansard, xlvii. pp. 973, 976.

² Hansard, xlvii. p. 984.

the policy of Lords Normanby and Morpeth; and, on referring to the Red-book, he found that the two ladies in the closest attendance upon the Queen were the wife of Lord Normanby and the sister of Lord Morpeth. Sir R. Peel told his intended colleagues what he meant to do. He should not propose any change in the offices below that of lady of the bedchamber. He trusted that the ladies who held the higher offices would voluntarily resign. If they did not, he must propose a change. This was not only reasonable, as requiring the most ordinary and indispensable token of the confidence of the sovereign, but it was a constitutional right. The highest authorities on constitutional points declared that the appointments of the household are state appointments, for which the Minister is responsible. Neither the Queen nor her ministers, however, knew this. Hitherto, there had been sufficient consideration for the dignity and the feelings of the Sovereign to keep the constitutional question out of sight. Now that the Melbourne Ministry had rashly brought it forward, it was found that Sir R. Peel was right. Though constitutionally right, it was, however, said at the time that he was politically wrong; and that he might have known that the ladies in question would certainly resign immediately, and their places be quietly filled up in a prudent manner with persons in a neutral position as to their political connections. That Sir R. Peel retired upon this difficulty was regarded as a sign that he was not ready for office; that not only was Ireland his "difficulty," as he said, but that it was so great a difficulty as to indispose him for office. If the Whigs now came in again, they would hold rule at his will and pleasure; and he could take their places at any time when they had fairly tried, and proved to the world, the issue of their Irish policy. However this might be, what took place about the household appointments was made known to all the world,—the Queen having given permission to Sir R. Peel to tell his part of the story in Parliament. The explanations of the Whig ministers, and the records of the daily news of the time, supply the rest.

When Sir R. Peel told the Queen, on the Thursday, what he proposed to do, she misunderstood him, as was afterwards acknowledged, and supposed him to contemplate the removal of all her servants and household friends.¹ This was certainly the impression she had given to the late ministers when they agreed in council on the mistaken advice which they gave the Queen. The Queen stopped Sir R. Peel in his statement of his wish to consult her predilections, by declaring that she would admit no change whatever in the female appointments of her household.² She sent for Lord J. Russell, and expressly put the question to

¹ Hansard, xlvii. p. 1010.

² Hansard, xlvii. p. 985.

him whether she was not right in this. He replied that she was right; and she then naturally requested him to support her now, as she had before supported her ministers.¹ She also appealed to Lord Melbourne, and stated her intentions to the Duke of Wellington. The Duke was of opinion, that Sir R. Peel must retire if the Queen's mind was thus made up. Lord Melbourne called his colleagues together, and in council they advised the Queen to send the following note to Sir R. Peel: "The Queen, having considered the proposal made to her yesterday by Sir R. Peel, to remove the ladies of her bedchamber, cannot consent to adopt a course which she conceives to be contrary to usage, and which is repugnant to her feelings."² Thus the Whig ministers formally assumed the responsibility of this act. No allusion is made to the constitutional principle of the case; and Lord John Russell's appeal throughout was to "usage." It is strange that he and his colleagues did not see how contrary to usage it was to place the Sovereign in the position into which they had brought their Queen.

In two or three hours, Sir Robert Peel sent a letter to the Queen, in which he carefully related the facts of the case, — an act of justice to himself under the circumstances.³ He had been misapprehended in the highest quarter at first; and already reports were flying abroad through Whig households of his having desired to separate the Queen from all the friends of her childhood, and to impose upon her an unacceptable set of servants of Tory politics, and so forth. The Queen gave him permission to read her note and his own letter in Parlia-^{Withdrawal}ment, and to set himself right, as far as these went. ^{of Sir R. Peel.} He was so misrepresented, however, by some close connections of the Whig ministers, — among others by the Hon. William Cowper, the nephew and private secretary of Lord Melbourne, in an address to the Hertford electors, for which he afterwards publicly apologized,⁴ — that the popularity of the Queen and her Whig ministers suddenly rose for a short time, at the expense of the reputation of the Duke of Wellington and Sir R. Peel for loyalty and good manners; and the Melbourne Ministry were thus enabled to return to office with more apparent probability of being able to govern the country than had lately been seen. But mistakes, fostered and spread by party-spirit, are not of long duration; and, in a few weeks, the noisiest and busiest of agitators and journalists on the side of the Whigs were glad to drop all mention of the bedchamber question. By that time, Her Majesty's advisers had admitted that "Her Majesty's position was untenable."

¹ Hansard, xlvii. p. 1001.

³ Hansard, xlvii. p. 985.

² Hansard, xlvii. p. 985.

⁴ Annual Register, 1839, p. 130.

How far their own restored position was tenable was now the question. What was to be done about Jamaica, which they could govern only by a suspension of the constitution, which Parliament would not effectually support? Lord J. Russell had also declared, in resigning, that there were other serious affairs which the Melbourne Ministry could not conduct without more of the confidence of Parliament than they possessed. Sir R. Peel's statement of what his difficulties would have been, afford some insight into those of the restored Whigs:¹ "The state of India, the state of Jamaica, the state of Canada, would all require my immediate consideration; and, with respect to some of them, the proposal of legislative measures. I considered the internal state of this country,—I saw insurrection in the provinces,—I saw the letter of the noble Lord opposite [Lord J. Russell], inviting the respectable part of the population of this country to form themselves into armed societies for resisting outrage. . . . Let me take that particular question on which my chief difficulty would arise. Who can conceal from himself that my difficulties were not Canada; that my difficulties were not Jamaica; that my difficulties were Ireland?" Here was arduous work enough for any Cabinet; but the most insuperable difficulty in the way of that of Lord Melbourne was the Jamaica question.

On the reconstruction of the Ministry, the first business was to elect a new Speaker of the Commons. Mr. Abercromby had before wished to resign, on the plea of health. The House was sorry to part with him, for he had discharged his duty well. Mr. Charles Shaw Lefevre was chosen to succeed him by a majority of 18 over Mr. Goulburn, who was proposed by the Conservatives. This election took place on the 27th of May; and, on the 30th, Mr. Labouchere introduced a new Jamaica Bill.² The opposition, under the circumstances, held the control of this measure; and it was amended in the Lords till it became what Sir R. Peel had proposed. It allowed time to the Assembly to re-enact the annual laws, without which the affairs of the island could not proceed; and invested the governor in council with power to renew those laws, at the expiration of two months after the Assembly should have separated without re-enacting them. This measure, which the ministers declared to be, in their opinion, only better than none, passed its last parliamentary stage on the 9th of July.³

After the close of the session, Lord J. Russell became Colonial Secretary in the place of Lord Normanby, who had held the

¹ Hansard, xlvii. pp. 987, 989.

² Hansard, xlvii. p. 1050.

³ Hansard, xlix. p. 85.

office only since the preceding February. Lord Normanby went to the home office; and Mr. F. Baring became ^{Official} Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the place of Mr. ^{changes.} Spring Rice, who entered the Upper House as Baron Monteagle. Lord Howick left the war-office, and was succeeded by Mr. Macaulay; and some changes took place in the minor functions of the Administration.

In the midst of such circumstances as have been exhibited, and of others which remain to be detailed,—in view ^{Queen's en-} of the colonial difficulties, the domestic distress which ^{gagement.} was now daily darkening over England, the violence of the Chartists, the critical state of Ireland, the sudden and portentous agitation against the corn-laws, the manifest feebleness of the Ministry, and the no less manifest misguidance of the young Sovereign by her paternal Prime Minister,—there was nothing that was more desired by the nation at large than to see their young Queen married. Every one knew that her consort—be he who he might—would have no concern with politics. It was not that. It was that the domestic life of the Sovereign might be naturally compacted, and that a happy domestic life might be the point of support of her public life. Some rabid Tory gentlemen had lately grown insolent, and taken insufferable liberties with the royal name. Some mistakes had been made, in both public and private relations; and the natural and the most desirable security against other such misadventures seemed to be the placing of the virtuous young sovereign under the sanctities of a genuine home. There had been a constant succession of royal visitors from the continent,—a long array of young princes, who were called in the newspapers “the royal suitors;” but it was not till the beginning of 1839 that any general impression existed as to where the Queen’s preference rested, or whether she had any. At last, however, it was no great surprise to anybody when the Queen summoned her Privy Council to meet on the 23d of November, and then communicated her intention to ally herself in marriage with Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.¹ The Council requested Her Majesty to allow the news to be made public; and the general satisfaction was all that she could have desired. It might have been wished that her intended husband should not have been her cousin-german, and that he should have been five or seven years older than the Queen, instead of three months younger; but there was every thing in the reputation of the Prince, and in the character of his thoughtful and informed mind, to ^{Prince} encourage the hope that the connection would be one of ^{Albert.} permanent satisfaction to the nation.

¹ Annual Register, 1839, p. 313.

During the winter, the aspect of public affairs darkened so much that it was the universal wish that the marriage should take place with the least possible delay. The young pair had a far more thorough knowledge of each other than is usual in the case of lovers: they had been companions in childhood, and friends during their youth, — there was nothing to wait for; and, in a few weeks, the young Queen became a wife, to the great joy of those who most desired that her life should be serene and

happy. The marriage took place on the 10th of February, 1840, amidst fitting pomp and observance, in the palace of St. James.¹ It was precisely at a quarter before one o'clock that the firing of cannon announced to the inhabitants of London that the ring was placed on the finger of the bride; and, a little before four, the Queen and her husband set out for Windsor, leaving London to the gayety for which it had little spirits on any meaner occasion of that dark year. For the day, all forgot their anxieties and fears in banquets and illuminations.

A month before the marriage took place, the Queen had declared to Parliament, in the royal speech, her intention of taking Prince Albert for her husband, and her confidence that her subjects would enable her to provide for such an establishment as might appear suitable to the rank of the Prince and the dignity of the Crown.² These announcements, in themselves as formi-

dably unusual for a young girl to make as could be conceived, were offered with a simplicity and dignity that won all hearts; and the subsequent awkward conclusion to the discussion on the Prince's income was accepted by them both with the best possible grace.

On the 20th of January, three weeks before their marriage, a Bill for the naturalization of Prince Albert was introduced in the Lords; and passed rapidly, by the suspension of all the standing orders. The only stop in its progress was owing to the ordinary cause of delay in Whig measures, — a mistake which could not be allowed to pass.³ Precedence next to the Queen was provided without any safeguard; so that, in case of the Queen's death without heirs, and the consequent accession of the King of Hanover, Prince Albert would have precedence of the then heir-apparent, the Prince of Wales. The ministers first amended their Bill by proposing to give precedence next after any heir-apparent; but, again, in order to avoid delay, Lord Melbourne declared his intention of omitting all that part of the Bill which related to the subject of precedence. Thus reduced to a project of simple naturalization, the Bill passed both Houses as rapidly as possible. In discussing the address, some

¹ Annual Register, 1840, Chron. 15.

² Hansard, li. p. 1.

³ Hansard, li. p. 576.

question had been made in both Houses about the omission of any declaration of Prince Albert being a Protestant, — a scruple which was decided to be unnecessary, as, by the act of settlement, the Protestantism of the royal consort was an indispensable condition.¹ All parties were eager to declare their conviction of the indisputable Protestantism of the Prince, whose family were the first protectors of the Reformation. There were some who could perhaps have told how much of the family pride of the ducal family of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha was invested in its connection with Luther; and how in the Prince's portfolio might be seen sketches of the old castle on its height, finished with the care which is given to the delineation of sacred places, because there Luther took refuge for a time, and therein are his apartments — his bedstead itself — preserved with reverential care. If the object had been to select for the Queen the most Protestant of the Protestant princes of Germany, the searchers should have gone first to Saxony; and, when there, to the old castle of Coburg; and there, at Luther's table, or at the foot of Luther's worm-eaten pulpit, they would have found our Prince Albert.

As to the annuity to be voted to the Prince, — Lord J. Russell proposed that it should be, in accordance with prece-
Annuity.
 dents which he adduced, 50,000*l.*, to be granted out of the consolidated fund, to commence on the day of his marriage, and continue for life.² After an adjournment from the 24th to the 27th of January, Mr. Hume moved that the amount should be 21,000*l.* This proposal was voted down by a large majority.³ But it was clear that the times were unfavorable for a liberal grant. The distress of the manufacturing classes was becoming fearful, — the price of wheat being at that time 81*s.*, while the cotton-mills were working short time; and the prevalent suffering was shown by armed outbreaks of Chartism, and the rapid sinking of the revenue. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was announcing a deficit with every successive budget. At the close of the session of 1838, Parliament, following the lead of the ministers, had thought it right to refuse an augmentation of income to the Duke of Sussex, though the refusal compelled him to resign his office of president of the Royal Society; and had also, by a narrow majority, decided against indemnifying their Speaker for the loss of his property by the fire which consumed the Houses of Parliament.⁴ The sanguine and complacent Whig Ministry were now so truly alarmed at the aspect of affairs, that economy became naturally the ruling idea of the House of Commons. Yet, when the sum of 30,000*l.* per annum was proposed by the opposition, instead of the 50,000*l.* of the ministers, Lord

¹ Hansard, li. pp. 11, 111.² Hansard, li. p. 554.³ Hansard, li. p. 611.⁴ Annual Register, 1838, p. 174.

J. Russell lost temper, and declared that the amendment was intended as a mark of disrespect to the Queen. For this, he was duly rebuked by Sir J. Graham and Sir R. Peel, who showed reason enough for their advocacy of the smaller sum, independent of the distress of the country, which they did not conceive to be concerned in the question.¹ The majority in favor of the smaller amount was 104, in a House of 420.

The Prince took all in good part. Kind-hearted and reasonable, he was perhaps really willing to bear his share of the pressure of the times, and ready to suppose that the House of Commons was the best judge of what his income ought to be. If not so, he was too sensible to show any discontent; and, by his good-humor on the occasion, he gained an esteem which was more worth having than any wealth that Parliament could have given him.

¹ Hansard, li. pp. 619, 625; li. 633

CHAPTER XIV.

ALLUSION has been made to the darkness of the times in 1839 and 1840. Since the peace, there had hardly been a season so gloomy in fact and in prospect. In looking ^{Dark times.} for the causes of the misery and crime of this period, we find them, as usual, in the state of the crops. There were then, as usual, multitudes of people who did not understand; and the fact, and their failure to understand it, together, were soon to bring about the greatest social, as Parliamentary reform was the greatest political, event of the century. There were then, as usual, professional men, country gentlemen, and others by hundreds, who said, with an air of superiority, that they took no interest in politics; and these were the men who concluded that the commotions and outrages of the period were owing to the unfortunate propensity of "the lower classes" to concern themselves with politics. There were then, as usual, clergymen by hundreds, who said, with a complacent smile or an air of pious trust, that, since England was England, there had always been alarms of bad crops, but that it always ended in there being a harvest; these gentlemen not having the remotest idea of the differences between one group of years and another as to production of food, and never perceiving that it was their especial duty as clergymen to look closely into the causes of want, woe, and crime. They thought that the perverseness of the heart of man was explanation enough of any amount or capricious accession of guilt; and, as they could not stoop to politics or political economy, they remained unaware that the average of moral disease might be anticipated as confidently as that of physical disease, from the estimate of the harvests of any group of years. It was no thanks to them that this miserable experiment is now no longer likely to be tried. It is no thanks to them, that, by opening to our country an access to the harvests of the world, a prospect lies before us of a more equable supply and price of food, and a cessation of the fluctuations and cruel uncertainties which perilled the fortunes of the well-fed, and wore out the heart and hope of the multitudes who had to win their bread from day to day. There were still hundreds and thousands of men — and the leading politicians of both parties were among them — who thought that to attack the

corn-laws was to attack the constitution of society; who would no more listen to evidence of the mischief of agricultural protection than they would listen to arguments against the institution of property. It is worth recording again here, that the Prime Minister himself had volunteered his opinion on the matter in the House of Lords, saying that he had heard of many mad things in his life, but, before God, the idea of repealing the corn-laws was the maddest he had ever heard of. Thus it was with Lord Melbourne. Lord J. Russell counselled the House to refuse to hear evidence on the operation of the corn-laws. Sir R. Peel was as yet pondering sliding-scales, and destined to propose and try another before he should discover that this was a matter in which adjustments could be of no possible use, while they were pretty sure to do mischief. To set against all these classes of men, there was another, — a little band at first, but soon becoming a host, — who understood the matter enough to be sure of attaining a thorough knowledge of it, as soon as they should combine to act upon what they knew. The darkening of the times in 1839 determined these men to aim at a repeal of the corn-laws as the first object to their own fortunes, to the actual preservation of the working-classes, and to the welfare of the nation at large.

During the four years from 1832 to 1835 inclusive, more Successful harvests. wheat was grown in Great Britain, it is believed, than was ever known before. More wheat was sown; and the improvements in tillage were by that time so considerable as to produce clear results.¹ But, during those four years also, the winters had no undue frosts; the spring rains were enough, and not too much; and the summer suns were warm enough to harden and ripen the grain. They were four noble harvests, as far as wheat was concerned, though barley rose nearly to the price of wheat, and hay and pulse were dear. The farmers suffered, as they were apt to do, under a stringent corn-law which made them rich in bad seasons, and prepared for their impoverishment in abundant years. But, while they were in such adversity as that royal speeches commiserated them, and Parliament discussed their case, everybody else was prospering. The very cattle, sheep, and pigs were eating wheat; brewers and distillers were making beer and spirits from it. The agricultural laborers, though receiving very low wages, were more comfortable than usual, from the cheapness of provisions. They found themselves in easier circumstances with 8s. per week, and wheat at 35s., than with 12s. per week, and wheat at 77s. As for all other working-classes of the kingdom, it was a time of high prosperity for them. All the mines and all the mills were busy, and the tradesmen of the towns were everywhere prosperous; for the

¹ Tooke's History of Prices, Continuation, p. 3.

largest classes of society were employed on full wages; and, bread being cheap, they had money to spare for other objects of purchase. The houses of the operatives filled with furniture, and their chests with good clothes. The tradesmen rose in proportion from this increase of custom, and in their turn improved the condition of the manufacturers, who, in consequence, kept up or extended their manufacture, to the continued benefit of the operatives. Such was the happy state of things while we were blessed with good harvests; and the prosperity reached its height towards the close of 1835, when wheat was at 35s. 4d. Owing to its cheapness, less was now sown of wheat, and more of other things which had become dear.

In 1836, the spring was cold and dry, and the summer was ungenial in the north of England and Scotland; so that the harvest was not well got in. On the whole, there was a considerable falling-off from preceding years; but, still, more than enough was got in for the wants of the country till the harvest of 1837.¹ The crop of 1837 was just sufficient for the wants of the country; but it was inferior to the production of any one of the five preceding seasons. The people were still eating abundantly, as the last few years had accustomed them to do. If now there had been a propitious season, every thing might have gone on smoothly, though food-prices were higher than they had been. During the commercial difficulties of the spring of 1837, which have been before exhibited, when credit was disturbed by foreign influences, the price of wheat, as of other things, had risen unduly: but, at the end of 1837, it was 53s.; and, at this price, manufactures, commerce, and the condition of the people, might have gone on without deterioration. But the weather was now dreadful. In the middle of January, an extraordinary frost set in, which lasted so long as to occasion serious fears for the wheat in the ground; and, in February, the price rose to 55s. 3d. In March, it rose further; and again in May, when frosts recurred. In July, it was 68s. As harvest prospects did not improve, the price of wheat rose to 77s. in the third week in August. In September, all the bonded wheat in the kingdom was entered for home consumption. Prices fell as a large quantity of foreign corn was thrown into the market in September; but, by the next January, wheat was at 81s. 6d. The difference of quantity home-grown between 1834 and this date was above 7,000,000 of quarters.² At the same time, and in strict connection with this deficiency, manufactures had fallen off, and the prices of articles in common use among the working-classes had risen; so that those classes found themselves now receiving less wages, and compelled to pay dear for the necessaries of life. The distress

¹ Tooke's Prices, Con. p. 7.

² Tooke's Prices, Con. p. 11.

was becoming formidable. Yet were hundreds of the clergy smiling over the usual alarms, as they called them, about the harvests; and the gentry who prided themselves on taking no interest in politics, discoursed upon the perverseness and wickedness of the human heart, which led men into discontent and rebellion, while living in the best country in the world. There was some increase in the wages of agricultural labor; and this was pointed out as a proof that high prices bring high wages, whereas the slight and temporary rise of agricultural wages fell far short of the increased expenditure of the laborers for food.

In May, 1839, there was snow by day, and frost of some continuance by night. So much foreign corn had been let in, that prices had fallen, wheat being at 67*s.* 10*d.* in July. More foreign corn was let out of bond; yet so bad were the prospects of the harvest, that, by the middle of August, wheat was again at 72*s.* 3*d.* More foreign wheat, dry and sound, was wanted to render our own damp and unripened grain fit for food; and, instead of our importing largely from Ireland, it was necessary to import more dry foreign wheat into Ireland than we could obtain of her damp and unripened grain. There was every ground for apprehension, that, while the working-classes were grievously under-fed, there would still be a deficiency of 2,000,000 quarters or more, while waiting for the next harvest.¹

During this time, the "landed interest" were watchful over their protecting law; suspecting, reasonably enough, that attempts would be made to relieve the suffering classes from its pressure.

The closeness of their vigilance was shown by a curious incident which took place in March, 1838. Colonel Seale proposed Grinding of corn in bond. in the House, that, to save merchants engaged in foreign trade from the necessity of obtaining their ship-supplies of food from the ports of the Baltic, permission should be given to grind the corn held in bond in our own ports,—security being afforded for the exportation of the flour.² To many of the most Conservative members in the House, the case appeared so clearly harmless to the British cultivator, that the first reading of the Bill was carried by a large majority; but the "landed interest" made so great an outcry about touching the corn-question at all, that, on the second reading, the Bill was thrown out by a majority of 220 to 150.

The natural consequences of popular distress showed themselves exactly as might have been expected, and with increasing force from year to year.³ If the rulers of the country did not understand the causes of the adversity, it was no wonder that the uneducated sufferers did not. While professional men and other

¹ Tooke's Prices, Con. p. 16.

² Hansard, xli. p. 1079.

³ Hansard, xlii. p. 1042.

gentry ascribed the turbulence of the time to the ingratitude of the human heart, the government—the Cabinet, and both Houses of Parliament—were sure of nothing so thoroughly as that the corn-laws had nothing to do with the distress, and therefore that their repeal would not cure it; and the working-classes never doubted that the government could cure it if they would, and that the manufacturers oppressed them by appropriating an undue share of the proceeds of manufactures.

Discontents.

Thus, the clergy obtained no hold over the classes which most needed their counsel and consolations; or, if they got them into the churches, preached to exasperated hearers, who said on week-days that they would not be put off with promises of bliss hereafter, from claiming the simple recompense of labor in this life. The government sat, in its deliberations, on the crust of a volcano; and, amidst successive warnings, was not half-conscious of its danger. When a spurt of flame or a jet of hot stones scared them now and then, they threw cold water into the particular crevice, or blocked it up with rubbish, and supposed the fire was put out. The Whig Attorney-general, Sir John Campbell, declared, at a public breakfast at Edinburgh, in the autumn of 1839, that Chartism was extinct,—because Birmingham and Newcastle had been quieted.¹ At the same time, the trades-union became formidable to the last degree.

Trades-unions.

On the trial of some cotton spinners at Glasgow, and on inquiry into the trade-combinations of Dublin, facts came out which appalled all who heard of the evidence. On no occasion did Mr. O'Connell appear to more advantage than in his action on this subject. At the risk of much unpopularity, he denounced these combinations with his whole power of feeling and eloquence,—combinations, not to obtain certain terms of recompense by fair association for an open object, but to ruin capitalists by burning their mills, and to oppress fellow-laborers by forbidding them to work on terms which they were willing to accept. It came out that threatening letters were sent to masters, and premiums were offered for firing their mills; that workingmen were beaten, sent away to foreign countries, burned with vitriol, kept in fear of their lives; and, as there was too much reason to believe, actually murdered. During this activity of the trades-unions, the impoverishing of the operatives went on at an increased rate; for they were compelled to pay for the expenses of the combination while they had any funds left. The Chancellor of the Exchequer noticed in the House, in May, 1838, the remarkable diminution of the deposits in savings-banks.² This brought the operative class all the sooner upon the funds of the capitalists. From working the mills short time, in order to prolong the pros-

¹ Spectator, 1839, p. 1034.

² Hansard, xlii. p. 1368.

pect of any work at all, the mill-owners were soon working even the short time at a loss, rather than turn the poor people adrift entirely; and their capital was melting away from week to week, — given to feed the poor as truly as if it had been paid as poor-rate. Meantime, Lord Ashley was regarding this class of men as oppressors who wrung their wealth out of the sinews of children; and every session renewed his motion for the Factory question.

protection of factory children; while the ministers, who evidently did not understand the case, paltered with it in a way which drew on them a severe rebuke from Sir R. Peel.¹ “For the government to say,” were his words, “session after session, that it would bring in a Bill on the subject; for the government, session after session, to abandon the Bills they introduce, without permitting others to be brought in by individuals in their stead, — is like applying a perpetual blister to the sides of the country, and keeping up the fever and irritation of a dangerous sore. . . . It is because I cannot fail to perceive the competition with which this country is threatened, — it is because I see that the interests of humanity, in the large view of the question, are likely to be less consulted by the short-sighted restriction of labor, than they are by its perfect freedom, — it is because the fact is unquestionable, that, though you may exempt the child from fatigue, you also deprive it of prospective employment, by driving the manufacturers to seek elsewhere that protection which is denied them at home, — it is for these reasons that I implore Parliament to decide the question this night, whether it will legislate or not.” It was not decided that night, nor for some years afterwards. After that session, Mr. Poulett Thomson, who understood the matter, appeared no more in the House; and, when he was gone, the other Whig ministers appeared unable to hold the convictions they occasionally expressed against legislative interference with factory labor. Thus was the irritation of this “perpetual blister” added to the many others under which employers and laborers were suffering. The mill-owners resented this interference with the management of their affairs, which operated as a reduction of the value of the machinery which they had put up in the expectation of freedom in making their arrangements, — seeing, all the time, how fruitless must be all attempts to legislate between parents and children, and how manufactures must droop under arbitrary restrictions imposed by the legislature. The operatives were kept in a state of agitation, whatever might be their opinions on the subject. Some fretted at the refusal of the legislature to let Lord Ashley take care of their children; while those of an opposite way of thinking declared it no time to be preventing their families from

¹ Hansard, xliii. pp. 975, 976.

earning all they could, and resented this interference with their only possession, their labor, as the most flagrant attack yet attempted on the rights of the poor. All this did not tend to the tranquillization of the country.

During the latter part of 1838, when Chartist meetings were held frequently, and with a formidable aspect throughout the north of England, the Home Secretary, Lord John Russell, had shown a humane anxiety to bring the ignorant crowd to their senses, and within the limits of order, without visiting their guilty leaders with any treatment which could be construed as persecution, and be made to yield the ordinary fruits of persecution. Many complaints were made of want of vigor in this method of proceeding; but there appears every reason to believe that the disorder of the time would have been more violent if severity had been used, instead of being extinguished. Under a Sidmouth rule at the home-office, we might have seen all the north of England in a blaze of rebellion before the end of 1838. As it was, matters grew too threatening to be left to take their course without check. Great allowance was to be made for the irritation of the Lancashire operatives, from suffering of body and mind; but, in the month of November, the torchlight meetings became formidable enough to alarm the inhabitants at large, to whom protection was due. On the 22d of that month, the Home Secretary sent a letter to the Lancashire magistrates, requesting them to make public notification of the illegality of torchlight meetings of the kind then in fashion, and to declare their intention of preventing or dispersing such meetings.¹ This was followed up, in the middle of December, by a royal proclamation, which enjoined all persons to desist from holding torchlight meetings. It was time to put some restraint on the leaders and orators of these meetings; for now the Rev. J. Stephens, the chief orator, had denounced a mill-owner at Ashton-under-Lyne as "a devil's magistrate," and had prophesied that "his house would soon be too hot to hold him;" and this gentleman's factory was fired one night soon after, while Stephens was holding forth to a torchlight assemblage. Stephens was arrested before the end of the month, but admitted to bail, while awaiting his trial at the Liverpool assizes. While out on bail, he preached to crowded congregations, with a violence of language which looked like insanity. Some of the witnesses against him were respectable Wesleyans, who had sat under his father's ministry, and were most reluctant to appear against the agitator; but they knew so much of the sharpening of pikes and preparation of fire-arms, and were so alarmed and distressed at the spread of a spirit of murderous rebellion in a neighborhood

¹ Spectator, 1838, pp. 1155-1173.

generally quiet, that they could not doubt their obligation to get Mr. Stephens silenced by the law. He was sentenced to an imprisonment of a year and a half in Knutsford Jail. A far more respectable and reasonable man was chairman of some of the earlier meetings,—among others, at the great Kersal-Moor meeting at Manchester, when not fewer than 200,000 persons are said to have been congregated,—Mr. Fielden, the member for Oldham, the great promoter, under Lord Ashley, of the ten-hour measure. Mr. Fielden was a man of great benevolence, and of a disinterestedness which gave him an influence among men better informed than himself, which he had not judgment or knowledge to command. He was too good for such work as the grosser kind of Chartist agitation, when he once saw what it was becoming; but his early sanction of torchlight meetings was a mistake to be regretted. The other leaders at this period were Richard Oastler, of Leeds, whose complacent ignorance unfitted him for any task of political guidance; and Feargus O'Connor, whose only escape from a charge of cruel fraud on his followers for a course of years, is in an admission of such senselessness and ignorance as have made him the worst enemy of those whom he professed to serve. It was very probable, that, from the moment when Feargus O'Connor first placed himself at the head of a Chartist procession to the last stoppage of his land-scheme, he may have fancied himself a sort of saviour of the working-classes; but, if so, he must bear the contempt and compassionate disapproval of all men of ordinary sense and knowledge, as the only alternative from their utter reprobation.

After 1839 came in, new leaders and new mobs arose, and also a more respectable association, which deserved better than to be connected in name and reputation with the Chartism of the Stephens and Oastlers, and the torchbearers who fired factories. Delegates were sent from the working-classes to form a convention in London, for the promotion of the rights of the Commons of England, and especially for calling the Commons House to account for its neglect of the interests of the working-classes. This National Convention could not effect much, from the want of intellectual discipline, political knowledge, and business habits, among the members; but it was so clear in its reprobation of physical force for the attainment of its objects, so free from rapacity in its aims, and so earnest in its pursuit of rights and privileges which are legitimate and virtuous objects of desire, that it was regarded with kindness by all good-hearted and unprejudiced men, however little hope or fear they might feel from its proceedings. This kindly feeling was very evident on the presentation of the national petition prepared by the Convention, and carried into

National
Convention.

National
petition.

the House of Commons on the 14th of June. It was a wonderful document, — “a cylinder of parchment about the diameter of a coach-wheel, literally rolled into the House,” — and signed by upwards of 1,200,000 persons.¹ The ordinary rule of permitting no speech on the presentation of a petition was disregarded on this occasion; and when a member desired, in insolent language, to stop the business, he was resisted by the feeling of the House and the indulgent disposition of the Speaker. So Mr. Attwood was allowed, by a listening House, to advocate the plea of the petitioners for the “recovery of those ancient privileges” which were “the original and constitutional rights of the Commons of England.” The temper of the House showed that the effort was not altogether in vain, though no legislative consequences could be expected to ensue. No persons in England better deserved a respectful hearing than this million of petitioners; and there is reason to believe that no persons in England more sincerely mourned the outbreaks of the physical-force Chartists during this year than the leaders of the National Convention. The petition occasioned a good deal of discussion in the House, when, on the 12th of July, a committee was moved for to consider the five points of the petition, — universal suffrage, ^{Five points.} vote by ballot, annual Parliaments, renumeration of members, and abolition of the property qualification; but the committee was refused by a majority of 189, in a House of 281.²

The Home Secretary remained on the watch during the first half of the year, — till assured by the Attorney-general that Chartism was extinct. In February, he called to account a magistrate of the borough of Newport, in Monmouthshire, a Mr. Frost, for violent language at a public meeting. Mr. Frost's replies were insolent in the extreme; but, as there had been at the outset one of the ordinary Whig mistakes, ^{Frost.} in supposing him a magistrate of the county instead of the borough, and as Mr. Frost disclaimed a part of the charge, he was not at once removed.³ This was a stretch of forbearance much censured when the event showed Mr. Frost's unworthiness of it. But he soon provoked his removal; and it does not appear that the gentleness used towards him in the first instance had any effect in promoting the subsequent rebellion, while it was valuable as proving the disposition of the government to lenity in a time of popular suffering. In April, there was a Chartist riot at Devizes; or rather, a rising of the ^{Riots at Devizes.} people of Devizes, under Tory leadership, against the Chartist assemblage of laborers who came, a thousand strong, armed with bludgeons, to hold a meeting in the market-place.⁴ In July,

¹ Spectator, 1839, p. 557.² Hansard, xlix. p. 274.³ Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 22.⁴ Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 49.

Birmingham was kept in a state of disturbance for many days by Chartist turbulence. Sixty policemen were sent to Birmingham, on application from the authorities of the town; and a collision ensued between the police and the mob, which was ended only by the appearance of a troop of cavalry, after some stabs and many blows had been given.¹ The interference was resented by some of the better order of Chartist leaders, in published resolutions, for the seditious character of which the authors suffered trial and imprisonment. The riot took place on Thursday, the 4th of July. On the Sunday evening, a mob stopped the service at St. Philip's Church. On Monday, the police and military again dispersed a meeting. On Tuesday, the Chartists, having been denied the use of the Town-hall, met in an open space. The Rifles were called to disperse the assembly, but were so assailed that they were ordered to load and make ready. Before they fired, a troop of dragoons came down upon the mob, who then fled. The inhabitants hoped that the mischief was over; but, on the 15th, a far worse outbreak took place.² First, windows and street-lamps were smashed; then iron palisades were torn up; houses were forced, warehouses pillaged, and bonfires made of the contents; lights put out in the streets; and, finally, houses burned down. It was by the military that the outbreak was overcome at last; and it was some days before the orderly classes of the town could take any rest. By that time they were very weary and very wrathful; weary with patrolling the streets, and keeping watch against incendiary fires; and angry with that most painful sort of wrath which has in it a mixture of fear. Some of the best workmen in Birmingham were Chartists. Some of the most indispensable men in the town had become insufferably insolent to their employers, without the excuse of hunger, which was admissible in the case of too many of the Lancashire malecontents. Many of the Birmingham Chartists might have been ten-pound householders, and in possession of all the substantial comforts of life, if they had been capable of the prudence and self-denial which had raised some of their employers from a position like their own; and it was exasperating to their employers to be insulted in their own manufactories, and their business put to hazard, by men whom they could not well dismiss, but by whom they were told that all capitalists were tyrants, born with a silver-spoon in their mouths, and so on. The evil here was clearly not political. It was social,—the master-evil of popular ignorance, under which it appeared but too probable that society must be dissolved, sooner or later, if popular enlightenment could not be achieved. Yet Birmingham is one of the

¹ Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 103, 104.

² Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 109–112.

best of our towns, in regard to means of popular instruction. Sheffield is another; but, in Sheffield, matters were even worse. Besides the usual manœuvres of breaking windows, extinguishing the street-lights, and pelting the soldiery, the malecontents planned the murder of some of the best and kindest-hearted gentlemen of the place. At New-
At Sheffield.
 castle-upon-Tyne, at Stockport, at Manchester, as well
At New-castle, &c.
 as in the neighborhood of London, assemblages were attempted for purposes of intimidation, and dispersed with more or less of difficulty. One of the most painful incidents was the extortion of money or goods from shopkeepers, under intimidation; a practice which called forth a letter from the Home Secretary to the Magistrates of Manchester, encouraging them to use the most vigorous means to put down this method of pillage.¹ Many who leaned towards the Chartists before, in sympathy if not in conviction, gave them up altogether on the appearance of this symptom of the agitation. One of the strange caprices of the malecontents was attending the cathedrals and other churches in overwhelming numbers, and wearing some sort of badge. Five hundred of them went in procession to St. Paul's, in August. At first, most of them insisted on wearing their hats; but they yielded the point to the vergers, and behaved very quietly. On the next Sunday, Norwich Cathedral was crowded to the last foothold by the Chartists of the city; to whom the Bishop in his sermon offered a strong but kind remonstrance. At the Old Church at Manchester, there was a singular scene, if the record of the time be true. The Chartists quitted the church on the giving out of the text of the sermon; and the reason is said to be, that, instead of accepting the Scripture verse prescribed beforehand by his Chartist hearers, the preacher chose, "My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."² For the preacher's sake, we must hope that the choice of his text had no reference to the Chartists. This mode of action — by filling the churches — was soon given up, as it evidently did not aid the Chartist cause, and was wisely passed over in quietness; and it had ceased before the autumn, with those other demonstrations, whose discontinuance had persuaded the Attorney-general himself that Chartism was extinct.

It was only a lull; and that Edinburgh declaration was mischievous during the ensuing weeks, as showing that the ministers were off their guard, — to say nothing of its tone of triumph, which was any thing but conciliatory. Mr. Frost was awake and active, and far from grateful for the leniency which had afforded him an opportunity for remaining in the magistracy at

¹ Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 183.

² Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 151.

the beginning of the year. On the 3d of November, which was on Sunday, his brother-magistrates at Newport had information that he was marching down large bodies of armed men from the hills upon the town. The attack upon the town was to have been made in the night: but the weather was bad; and the malecontents did not muster in sufficient force till the morning, when, at about ten o'clock, they entered the town. They attacked the hotel where the military were stationed, and provoked the destruction of more than twenty of their number. The magistrates acted with eminent discretion and courage; the mayor, especially, so distinguishing himself that he was afterwards knighted at Windsor Castle. Frost's followers amounted to upwards of 7000 when within the town, and there were very many more upon the hills.

The conspiracy, frustrated by bad weather and the good conduct of the Newport authorities, was found to be a truly formidable one, from its orderly arrangements, the number of persons in the district involved in the scheme, and its connection with the Chartists of Birmingham and other places. Two other leaders, Jones and Williams, were arrested and tried with Frost.

Frost,
Williams,
and Jones.

There could be no doubt of the enormity of their crime in leading this rebellion; and it was not easy to see on what plea their pardon could be asked. It was asked, however,—even demanded, from time to time, for some years; but it was enough that their lives were spared. If their punishment of transportation were remitted, it is difficult to see who should be punished. Many who lamented the transportation of the Dorsetshire laborers could see no excuse for Frost, Williams, and Jones.

The state of things was very fearful. The great unsolved question of the rights of labor lay at the bottom of these perplexities and prevalent discontents; and nobody saw it,—nobody who could obtain a hearing, or in any way exhibit the facts. Those who saw any thing of the truth were precisely those to whom a hearing was denied,—the more enlightened of the manufacturing and trading class who were turned back from the doors of the legislature when they asked the Commons to listen to proof of the disorganizing tendency of the corn-laws. The Chartists understood nothing of the operation of the corn-laws against their interests; and they were so far from comprehending their own existing rights, while demanding others, that they permitted pretended friends to urge the legislature to take from them the command of their only possession,—their labor. Tory agitators went among them to incite them to demand ten-hour Bills, and to alienate them from asking a free supply of food. To obtain a free admission of

Origin of the
Anti-corn-
law League.

food was only a part of the satisfaction of the great difficulty, — of the rights of labor; but it was a very important part, — at the time, the chief and most immediately pressing consideration: but the government did not see it; neither House of the legislature saw it, any more than the Chartists; and they believed that the men who had begun to agitate for it were disturbing an old system, — the radical policy of the empire, — for the sake of enlarging the margin of manufacturing profits, and putting more money into their own pockets, without giving the operatives their share. All this was mournful blindness and folly; but the final action against the corn-laws had fairly begun, and those who were engaged in it knew that their end was secure. If the great labor question could remain a matter of controversy till the corn question should be settled, instead of becoming one of revolution, all might yet be well; and, to accomplish this, the anti-corn-law agitators set to work with a zeal, a knowledge, a pertinacity, and a spirit of self-sacrifice, probably unequalled in the history of peaceful agitation. When their work was done, and they looked back upon its beginning, they were surprised to find how little they themselves knew when they first devoted themselves to the cause. The deepest of them had scarcely an idea how closely the interests of the agricultural classes were involved in the establishment of a free-trade in food, and how society was injured through all its ramifications by an artificial restriction in the first article of human necessity. But what they did know was clear: as far as they reasoned, their reasoning was sound; and, if one part of their view was more clear and sound than another, it was that of the implication of this question with the larger and deeper one of the rights of labor, which was elsewhere causing only that perilous agitation that must issue either in suppression by force on the one hand, or in revolution on the other. The anti-corn-law agitators were, at this period, the only true Conservatives in the whole range of our society.

On the 18th of September, 1838, a public dinner was given to Dr. Bowring at Manchester, when the persons present — between fifty and sixty — agreed to form themselves into an association for the promotion of the principles of free-trade. They soon organized their force, settled their scheme of public instruction and political movement, raised subscriptions, were sanctioned by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and made known their existence to the large towns of England and Scotland by recommending similar associations in them all. This was the origin of the Anti-corn-law League.¹

At the beginning of 1839, we find assembled in London a large body of delegates from Manchester, Birmingham, and Glasgow,

¹ Spectator, 1839, p. 134.

and the great manufacturing towns, whose business it was to examine and analyze the House of Commons in regard to the corn-law question; to watch over its action on that question, and see how far professions were supported by knowledge and sincerity on either side; and to challenge the House, collectively and individually, by offering to prove at its bar all the allegations

they had made against the operation of the corn-laws.

Delegates. We find the metropolitan boroughs holding meetings to appoint delegates on their own behalf, and passing resolutions of discontent at the omission of the topic of the corn-laws from the Queen's speech.¹ On the 7th of February, when Mr. Villiers had given notice of a motion that evidence on the operation of the corn-laws should be heard at the bar, Lord J. Russell made a little speech which caused a stronger sensation than some of the

The ministers. longest he had ever delivered. It was copied into the newspapers with a declaration that it made one's blood boil; and the universal impression, among men of all parties, seems to have been, that it proved him so unaware of the existing circumstances and temper of the nation as to injure his immediate reputation and influence, and to weaken him, unaccountably to himself, in every one of the various positions in regard to the corn-law question in which he afterwards endeavored to establish himself. He said, "The impression on his mind was that it would be his duty to oppose the motion as to hearing evidence at the bar."² He had not as yet found sufficient reasons or precedents to induce him to adopt that course. At the same time he must say, that, as there would be a great deal of discussion relating to facts, when a mode was proposed which he thought was conformable to precedent, and not inconvenient to the House, by which these facts could be ascertained, he should be willing, although not ready to propose it himself, to support a motion so to ascertain the facts." This might have been taken as a matter of course from Sir R. Peel in those days,—this speech about propriety and precedent, and the convenience of the House, in regard to a matter about which 3,000,000 of the best subjects in the empire had sent up representatives to London, and a message to Parliament. Such a speech would have suited Sir R. Peel's then position and views with regard to the corn-laws. But Lord J. Russell had declared to his Stroud constituents that the existing corn-laws were indefensible; and he declared on this very night that he believed the time to be come for a change. The delegates who were analyzing the House now knew where to place Lord J. Russell on their lists. He disapproved the corn-laws in the abstract,—just as the Carolina planters disapprove slavery in the abstract. In both cases, when an opportunity

¹ Spectator, 1839, p. 129.

² Hansard, xlv. p. 156.

for acting from that disapprobation occurs, the action goes over to the other side. This was proved on the 18th of the same month, when, the Cabinet being divided on Mr. Villiers's motion, Lord J. Russell voted against it, with Lord Howick, Lord Palmerston, Mr. Spring Rice, and some minor officials; while Mr. Poulett Thomson, in this his last session in Parliament, and Sir J. C. Hobhouse, voted for inquiry. Mr. Villiers's speech that night was not lost. It was a statement of singular force and clearness; and the occasion was destined to great celebrity. Of all the many weak and blind acts of the Whig ministers, none was more memorable than this refusal to hear evidence on a subject whose importance they professed to admit; and Mr. Villiers's position was conspicuous in proportion to their fall. On that night he assumed his post undisputed as the head authority in the legislature on the subject of the corn-laws; and from that night the Whig Ministers who opposed his motion lost all chance of being generally trusted in any popular action on that subject. If they had understood this as others understood it, their exit from power two years afterwards would have been made in another manner than it was. The majority of the Commons against inquiry was 361 to 172.¹ As for the Peers, they would not entertain the subject at all. Lord Brougham laid the case before them in a strong and able statement; but they negatived it without a division.

The delegates met, and passed votes of thanks to Lord Brougham and Mr. Villiers. Among the hopeful speakers was Richard Cobden. There was no cause for despondency, he said, because the House over the way had refused to hear them.² They were the representatives of three millions of people, — they were the evidence that the great towns had banded themselves together, and their alliance would be a Hanseatic league against their feudal corn-law plunderers. The castles which crowned the rocks along the Rhine, the Danube, and the Elbe, had once been the stronghold of feudal oppressors: but they had been dismantled by a league; and they now only adorned the landscape as picturesque memorials of the past, while the people below had lost all fear of plunder, and tilled their vineyards in peace. A public dinner at one of the theatres was offered to the delegates; but they were leaving town. They made no secret of why they were leaving town: it was to meet again at Manchester. The upholders of the corn-laws were quite at ease when they no longer saw the train of delegates going down to the House. Yet there were not wanting voices of warning which told them that the matter was not over. While one

¹ Hansard, xlv. p. 691.² Spectator, 1839, p. 178.

register of the time tells, with easy satisfaction, that the vote of the Commons "had the effect of putting the question to rest, and no more was heard of it during the remainder of the session," another is found giving warning that the departure of the delegates was like the breaking-up of a Mahratta camp: the war was not over, but only the mode of attack about to be changed. There was no secrecy about the new mode of attack. The delegates had offered to instruct the House: the House had refused to be instructed. The House must be instructed; and the way now contemplated was the grandest and most unexceptionable and effectual,—it was to be by instructing the nation. The delegates were to meet again at Manchester in a fortnight, to devise their method of general instruction, which, in its seven years' operation, approached more nearly to a genuine national education than any scheme elsewhere at work. By the Anti-corn-law League the people at large were better trained to thought and its communication, to the recognition of principles, the obtaining of facts, and the application of the same faculties and the same interest to their public as to their private affairs, than by any methods of intellectual development yet tried under the name of education.

The present was a time when minds were feverish, and disposed to undue alarm from any untoward circumstance; and the Queen was made to bear her share of the uneasy excitement of the period. It was no wonder, that, as all eminent persons are likely to occupy the visions of infirm minds, a young Queen should be especially liable to the intrusions of the insane. It was no wonder, to anybody, that one lunatic, having crept up to the garden-steps of Buckingham Palace, should threaten her Majesty, because no Protestant should occupy the throne of England; nor that another, having leaped the enclosures at Windsor, should demand admittance to the Castle as King of England: and so forth.¹ But there were worse alarms than these, for two or three years. At first, there really was terror when a pistol was fired near the royal carriage, in the course of the Queen's drives. Her popularity was by no means what it had been. Sometimes silence, and sometimes disagreeable cries, in the streets and the theatres, indicated this. The disheartened and suffering people could not understand how the Prime Minister could properly conduct the public business while seen daily with the Queen, or heard of at her parties; nor how so much money could be properly spent upon the Queen's banquets and balls, while so many poor were starving; nor how the Queen could enjoy festivities for six days in the week, while there was so much mourning in the land. When one pistol-shot after another

Attacks on
the Queen.

¹ Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 79, 246.

was directed at the Queen's carriage within two or three years, it was clearly proved in each case that there was no conspiracy, and no immediate working of political discontent; yet the general impression was that the odious act might not have been attempted in a season of prosperity and satisfaction. The first case, which occurred on the 10th of June, 1840, was a type of the rest, and may serve for a notice of them all. A youth of eighteen or nineteen, named Oxford, who was foolish, if not insane, fired two pistol-shots at the Queen in her phaeton on Constitution Hill. He was poor and ignorant; and it was so impossible to find any cause for the act, that he was pronounced insane, and given over to a lunatic asylum for life.¹ On this first occasion, the excitement was so strong, — members of Parliament applying for locks of Oxford's hair when it was cut off, — the whole aristocratic crowd in the Parks escorting the Queen home with cheers, and the affair appearing in capital letters in the newspapers for weeks, that it is not surprising that an ignorant person here and there, with a morbid longing for notoriety, should try to get it by shooting at the Queen. This became so well understood after a time, and it was clear that the risk to the Queen was, at the same time, so nearly nothing, that such affairs were treated as they should be, — as nuisances which might best be put a stop to by contempt and an ignominious punishment; and, during the next period, an Act passed by which such a prank was punished by whipping, accompanying imprisonment or transportation. The most abiding incident connected with this first attack is one which it is now — and was yet more at the time — pleasant to note. At the top of Constitution Hill, the Queen spoke to her husband; and the carriage, at his order, turned from the Hyde-Park entrance down Grosvenor Place. The Queen had thought of her mother, and went to her, that the Duchess of Kent might see that her daughter was safe before any other notice of the attack reached her. Of such attacks, no more mention will be made. The Queen has no enemies among her people. Sovereigns who lead innocent lives and have no political power have no enemies among their people; and the pointing of a pistol at the royal carriage, — a pistol, now without a bullet, and now without a lock, — by some poor creature who courts arrest, is an incident of which this cursory notice is sufficient. The first occurrence of the kind, however, certainly did not tend to relieve the depression of the period.

Some accidents went to increase the gloom. There were several dockyard fires happening so near together, and so mysteriously, as to excite fears of treachery; but one proved to be from spontaneous combustion, and another from

Dockyard
fires.

¹ Annual Register, 1840, Law Cases, p. 245.

an accident. The storms were severe and disastrous; and one, in the winter of 1839, was more like a tropical hurricane, than a mere winter storm in our own seas. Twenty persons were killed in Liverpool streets, and a hundred drowned on the neighboring shores.¹ Dublin was like a sacked city,—some houses unroofed, and others burning from the flight of sparks and brands. The repeal agitation was advancing in Ireland so formidably, that the Lord-lieutenant publicly declared at this time, that he should oppose to it the whole power of the government; and that all countenance of the government should be withheld from those who took part in it. There had been a new, though futile, rebellion in Canada.² As for the East, it required some courage to look that way. What a thoughtful man had been saying for years, that we should be compelled to conquer China, was now coming true. In the next period of our history, we shall have to tell of the Chinese war which was now beginning.³ In India, matters were in a more fearful state still. The blow had not fallen yet,—the blow which annihilated an Indian army; but it was felt that something terrible was impending; and, in fact, some very bad news was on the way. Under such accumulated gloom, destined yet to deepen for some time, it was a thought of comfort to the nation that the Queen was safe in the honor and repose of a home; and it was a matter of general rejoicing when the blessings of that home were enriched by the birth of a daughter on the 21st of November, 1840.⁴

¹ Compn. to Almanac, 180, p. 256.

³ *Ante*, vol. ii, p. 354.

² Compn. to Almanac, 1841, p. 255.

⁴ Annual Register, 1846, Chron. 110.

CHAPTER XV.

SOME beneficent legislation took place during this period, three instances of which were of such strong popular interest as to require notice in some detail.

Up to this time, the criminal law of the country had not been accessible to those who lived under that law; and it was no easy matter for professional men to attain any competent knowledge of it. The criminal law of England was contained in an immense and confused mass of documents,—statutes, ancient and modern records, reported decisions of the judges, and text-books. If the mind of every individual lawyer was required to deduce the law from all these repositories, it was clear that the vast work would not really be done; and if the profession proceeded on tradition, or in conventional agreement with regard to the most commonly occurring cases, it does not appear that the deposited law was of much practical use. It ill befitted a civilized state and an enlightened age that the criminal law should not be clearly ascertained, and laid down in some depository accessible to all. This great work was appointed, in 1833, to a royal commission, whose business it was to inquire how far it might be expedient to reduce the whole criminal law of the country, written and unwritten, into one digest; and to report on the best manner of doing it. In 1834, the commissioners reported in favor of the object; and they forthwith proceeded with the work. One of the immediate results of the labors of the commissioners was the Bill passed in 1836 for allowing the assistance of counsel to prisoners in criminal cases. In 1837, a far more important amelioration was achieved.¹

For some years past, public opinion had tended more and more towards the abolition of the punishment of death. From the time when Sir Samuel Romilly began his disclosures of the effects of severity of punishment, there had been a growing conviction that severity of punishment tends to the increase of crime. Whatever other objections to the punishment of death might exist,—some denying the right to take away human life at all,—some denouncing the cruelty of

Restriction of the punishment of death.

¹ Polit. Dict. i. p. 700.

cutting off a man at the moment of his being laden with crime, — others pointing to the cases of innocent persons who had been hanged, — the broad ground of the impolicy of the penalty lay open to its opponents of every class. It had been found, as often as tried, that the average of particular crimes lessened after the remission of the death-penalty, while the number of convictions increased largely in proportion. Prosecutors and juries would do their duty to society, when that duty no longer required of them what they considered the murder of the individual culprit. Justice became more certain; and with certainty in the administration of justice comes invariably decrease of crime. Those who knew these things had arrived at advocating a total abolition of the punishment of death; and the facts and figures they exhibited certainly appeared to leave no doubt as to the past operation of the principle of leniency, and no reasonable ground for question of its having the same effect in the future. The government and the criminal-law commissioners, who were not prepared for such a change as society at large now seemed to desire, pleaded that there might be a danger of revulsion to a vindictive system, if, by any accident, grave crimes should increase soon after the abolition of the death-penalty, — a plea which might as well have been urged against any remission whatever, and which took for granted the almost impossible supposition that society can go back to a barbarous system, after having achieved emancipation from it. Lord John Russell, especially, fell into his usual apprehension of “going too fast,” in his usual forgetfulness that it is impossible to go too fast towards any object, unless there is some reason for going slower. It is probable, however, that there were unavowed reasons for going slower. It is probable that those reasons lay in the difficulty of knowing what to do with the criminals now cleared off by the halter. Our system of secondary punishments is so imperfect, — our methods are so desultory and vacillating, and our failures have been of such serious import, that any government might feel perplexed about the disposal of a new and more desperate class of felons which would be brought under its care by the abolition of the punishment of death. If they had ventured to state this as their difficulty, instead of bringing forward pleas which everybody saw to be untenable, the enemies of death-punishment would have perceived at once that the direct way to their object was by taking in hand the subject of secondary punishments. But such an avowal — that men must be hanged because we did not know what else to do with them — could not be made by any government, either in decency or because no man could be hanged after such an avowal. So the commissioners and the government contented themselves with giving reasons which nobody believed in

for limiting, instead of abolishing, the punishment of death. It is possible that they might have remitted more, or the whole, if they had been as well aware as every government ought to be of the state of public opinion and feeling on a matter of which every man and every woman was capable of judging.

There can be no doubt that the courage and enterprise of the ministers and the commissioners were much stimulated by the exertions of Mr. Ewart in Parliament, and of many sensible men and able lawyers elsewhere, to concentrate the prevalent feeling and opinion against death-punishment altogether; or in all cases but murder. In 1837, the commissioners recommended the remission of the death-penalty in twenty-one out of thirty-one cases in which the liability had hitherto existed. They thought this extremely bold,—feared they were going faster and further than government would approve,—and did not know what Lord John Russell would think of so sweeping a change. Lord John Russell thought it bold, but enjoyed the prospect of throwing so great a boon into the lap of the nation and its representatives. On the morning of the day of debate, one of the commissioners went to prepare Lord John Russell for the occasion, by putting him in possession of the knowledge and the proposals of the commissioners. A friend begged him to tell the Minister, that some people thought the House and the nation more ready than he was aware of for the abolition of the death-penalty, and that he must not be surprised if he found it so. From the Minister's surprise at the result of that night's debate, it was clear that he had had no warning.

On the 23d of March, Lord John Russell had asked leave to bring in a Bill,—the first of the series which was to reduce the number of capital offences.¹ On the 19th of May, the order of the day for the necessary committee was read. The ministerial proposition was to remit the death-penalty in twenty-one cases, and to restrict it considerably in some of the ten which remained. Mr. Ewart moved an amendment, confining the penalty of death to the one case of deliberate murder,—scarcely disguising, in Lord John Russell's opinion, his object of obtaining an abolition of the punishment as soon after as possible. The Minister declared himself extremely surprised at the turn the debate had taken before the division.² Instead of rejoicing in the great boon which he was offering, and which he had supposed might be thought too daring, the House treated him as if he had been proposing to make the law more instead of less stringent. The ministerial adherents took the alarm; and it was understood that the Whig whipper-in strained every nerve to rally members for a division which they had concluded to be perfectly safe without

¹ Hansard, xxxvii. p. 733.

² Hansard, xxxviii. p. 912.

them. The result of these exertions was a ministerial majority of one. The Bills passed the Lords on the 14th of July: Lord Brougham observing that nothing but the pressure of time prevented his endeavoring to amend these measures, by making the remission of the death-penalty extend to all crimes except that of murder; and he did not know that he should venture to except that,—so convinced was he that capital punishment tended to the increase of crime and the impairing of justice.¹

The criminal-law commission continued its labors till 1845, when it expired; but revived, with an addition to its numbers, Results of the for the further prosecution of its objects. The com-
mission. missioners had then presented eight reports,—of high value.² Besides the subjects already mentioned, they reported on the treatment of juvenile offenders, and upon the consolidation of the general statute-law. Their digest of our criminal law, entitled “The Act of Crimes and Punishments,” is considered to have fulfilled the purpose of their appointment, and to be a national benefit too great to be fully appreciated but through lapse of time. The new commission of 1845, which included the members of the former one, was appointed for the revision of this “Act of Crimes and Punishments,” in preparation for its being made the law of the land. A subsequent report, by the members of the old commission, on the law of procedure as regards indictable offences, was likewise given to the new commission for revision, in the hope of its also becoming law. These preparations for rendering the criminal law of England clear, intelligible, and accessible in its statement to all, and the prosecution of offences simple, direct, and certain, are an honorable sign of the times, and a credit to the Administration of the period.

The session of 1839 was a memorable one, to at least half the nation, for yielding the first act of what must become a course of Infants'-custody Bill. legislation on behalf of the rights of women; who are in so many ways oppressed by the laws of England, that Lord Brougham's objection to the measure was based on his fear to touch a mass of laws so cruel and indefensible as that all must come down if any part were brought into question. The object now was to obtain for mothers of irreproachable conduct, who should be separated from their husbands, access to their young children by petition to the judges, in whose power it was to regulate the terms of that access. When this was clearly stated in the House in 1838,—when it was declared that by the law of England a husband of the most profligate character had the power of preventing his virtuous wife from ever seeing her children; that it was on behalf only of mothers irreproachable in the eye of the law that access to their children was asked for;

¹ Hansard, xxxviii. pp. 922, 1907.

² Polit. Dict. ii. p. 220.

and that this access was to be obtained only by permission of the equity judges,—the object sought appeared so mere a fraction of what was due to domestic claims, so small a restitution of natural rights profusely stolen by a barbarous law, that the Bill—called the Custody of Infants' Bill—was passed by the Commons rapidly, and by large majorities. In the Lords, however, there was opposition; and Lord Brougham recorded his views in a speech which ought to be preserved as a specimen of the morality professed in high places in the nineteenth century. In Hansard, the speech stands entire, for the use of future historians, and the amazement of future moralists.¹ What we have to do with here is the statement of the spirit and structure of the marriage-law as regards the rights of the wife, at the date of the controversy about the custody of the children.

“He was ready to admit, that the law was harsh and cruel in its operation on those cases which had been stated; and also that their small number was no guarantee that many more did not exist which had never seen the light. His noble friend had stated the evils of the present state of the law; he had shown how unjust the law was with regard to the treatment and the custody of the offspring of the wife by her husband; he had shown how it had operated harshly on the wife; and he had pointed out instances in which that law might have entailed evil on the children; and then he contended that his Bill must be accepted as a remedy, because it would be a less evil than the evils pointed out. But there were many evils which the Bill did not profess to remedy. Could any thing be more harsh or cruel than that the wife's goods and chattels should be at the mercy of the husband, and that she might work and labor, and toil for an unkind father to support his family and children, while the husband repaid her with harshness and brutality; he all the time rioting and revelling in extravagance and dissipation, and squandering in the company of guilty paramours the produce of her industry? The law was silent to the complaints of such a woman; or, if not silent, all it said was that in the sweat of her brow she should eat her bread; and not only so, but that in the sweat of her brow her husband should eat his bread, and spend the produce of her industry in insulting her by lavishing her property on his paramours. He knew that there were anomalies and a thousand contradictions in the marriage-law; but the existence of those anomalies and contradictions should operate as so many warnings against the introduction of new anomalies and changes in that marriage-law. . . . In that action [an action for damages against an alleged paramour] the character of a woman was sworn away. Instances were known

Lord Brougham on the position of wives.

¹ Hansard, xliv. pp. 779-788

in which, by collusion between the husband and a pretended paramour, the character of the wife had been destroyed. All this could take place, and yet the wife had no defence. She was excluded from Westminster Hall; and behind her back, by the principles of our jurisprudence, her character was tried between the husband and the man called her paramour. But what was the case when the man was the guilty party? What legislation was there in favor of the wife? Was it just that in her sufferings she should have no remedy, no sufficient remedy; but rather be left to the mockery and insult of her husband? The husband might pursue his course; he might refuse to live with his wife, unless she went to Doctors' Commons, and demanded a restitution of conjugal rights, which no woman of delicacy could well do. A wife had the greatest difficulty to obtain a separation in the case of adultery. There had been two cases only before that House in which such relief had been granted; the one being a case in which incest had been proved. The present state of the law was such as to bring out a passive resistance on the part of the sex, who felt that they were not properly represented in the legislature. Having shown that the law was not more oppressive to the wife in this than in other cases, he now came to consider whether the remedy proposed for the alleged evil was appropriate."

Lord Brougham's conclusion was adverse to the Bill; but that was of little moment in view of the service he rendered to the oppressed by his exposure of the position of married women in England. As he said, "they were not properly represented in the legislature." They were not represented at all. The party supposed, in works of political philosophy, to represent them, are precisely those against whom legislation is needed for their protection. In the case before us, it was, as was openly declared at the time, precisely the men who despised and distrusted women, and had no conception of such an ideal as the virtuous matronage of England, who exerted themselves to prevent the passage of the law which should permit a blameless mother occasionally to see her children, by an order from the equity judges. On that night, when Lord Brougham made his remarkable speech, the division was as remarkable as any thing that took place. Two tales were told in the course of the debates on the Bill, which melted the hearts of those who heard them. This was one source of interest. Another was the dread on the part of certain Peers, that this Bill would grant too much liberty to Englishwomen, and that they would be encouraged to elope, if they had hope of any laws being made in their favor, — though it was Division in the Lords. only women who had not eloped who were the objects of this Bill. The result was, in the words of Hansard: "The

House divided; content, 9; not content, 11, — majority, 2.¹ Bill thrown out.” There follows, however, a sensible protest against this rejection of the Bill, signed by Lords Holland and Lyndhurst, and the Duke of Sutherland.

The question was sure to come on again. When the position of mothers had once been argued, the nation which had sent out protectors of slaves, and which was striving to put an end to one-sided and tyrannical legislation in Jamaica, was not likely to neglect the suffering women at home whom tyranny had bereaved of their children. In the next session the Bill was passed.

There were circumstances connected with the final effort which can never be forgotten by the lawyers who prepared the Bill, the members of Parliament who supported it, or any women who heard of them; for all the women of Great Britain were insulted by the methods pursued to defeat the Bill. The case stands out clear from the law-magazines and the reviews of the time. First, attacks were made on the motives and characters of the originators and promoters of the Bill; and this was made less difficult and more unmanly by the fact being well known that it was at the instance of a bereaved mother that redress was sought; as it is always at the instance of sufferers that remedial legislation is achieved. Next, an article appeared in the “British and Foreign Quarterly Review,” which was intended to operate against the Bill, but which probably wrought the other way. This article proceeded on the supposition that all women are bent on mischief, and that the only way to manage them is to place them under the absolute despotism of their husbands. In the course of the argument or exposition, several of the most eminent ladies in Great Britain were insulted by name, and every woman in the world by implication. This article, or the substance of it, was reprinted in pamphlet form; and a copy of it was put into the hands of the Peers as they entered the House, by Lord Wynford, the chief agitator against the Bill. It did not answer its purpose with those Peers who really knew any thing of the matronage of England. The Bill was read a first time in the Commons on the 30th of May, and the last time on the 28th of June.² The will of the Commons had been sufficiently shown the year before. When the second reading in the Lords took place, Lord Wynford observed: “His noble and learned friend had truly said that the custody of the children belonged by law to the father.³ That was a wise law, for the father was responsible for the rearing up of the children; but, when unhappy differences separated the father and mother, to give the custody

¹ Hansard, xliv. p. 791.

² Hansard, xlviii. p. 1005.

³ Hansard, xlix. p. 492.

of the child to the father, and to allow access to it by the mother, was to injure the child; for it was natural to expect that the mother would not instil into the child any respect for the husband whom she might hate or despise. The effects of such a system would be most mischievous to the child, and would prevent its being properly brought up." Lord Wynford did not go on to say whether he thought it would be good for the child, in the custody of a profligate father, to hear that father's way of speaking of the irreproachable mother, — a way of speaking determined by the old rule that men hate those whom they have injured.¹ Lord Denman thought that "some alteration, and that of a sweeping character, was absolutely necessary to the due administration of justice, and for the prevention of the frightful injuries to society which the present system gave birth to. . . . In the case of '*The King v. Greenhill*,' which had been decided in 1836, before himself, and the rest of the judges of the Court of King's Bench, he believed that there was not one judge who had not felt ashamed of the state of the law; and that it was such as to render it odious in the eyes of the country. The effect in that case was to enable the father to take his children from his young and blameless wife, and place them in the charge of a woman with whom he then cohabited. The present law was cruel to the wife, debasing to the husband, and dangerous, and probably ruinous, to the health and morals of the children, who could not have any such sure guarantee against corruption, under the tutelage of a profligate father, as the occasional care of a mother." Lord Denman emphatically warned the Lords of the grave responsibility they would incur, both as regarded the morals of society, and their relation to the other House of Parliament, if they threw out this Bill, sent up now for the third time by such large majorities of the Commons. Lord Wynford's postponing amendment was negatived without a division; the Bill was read a third time on the 2d, and received the royal assent on the 17th of August. If the Queen understood the full significance of this Bill, as the first blow struck at the oppression of English legislation in relation to women, it must have been with singular pleasure that she made the Bill law.²

Another piece of beneficent legislation of this period was highly conservative of the domestic purity and happiness of Great Britain.

Coleridge, when a young man, was walking through the Lake District, when he one day saw the postman deliver a letter to a woman at a cottage door. The woman turned it over and examined it, and then returned it, saying that she could not pay the postage, which was a shilling. Hearing

Post-office system.

¹ Hansard, xlix. p. 493.

² Hansard, l. p. 369.

that the letter was from her brother, Coleridge paid the postage, in spite of the manifest unwillingness of the woman. As soon as the postman was out of sight, she showed Coleridge how his money had been wasted, as far as she was concerned. The sheet was blank. There was an agreement between her brother and herself, that, as long as all went well with him, he should send a blank sheet in this way once a quarter; and she thus had tidings of him without expense of postage. Most people would have remembered this incident as a curious story to tell; but there was one mind which wakened up at once to a sense of the significance of the fact. It struck Mr. Rowland Hill that there must be something wrong in a system which drove a brother and sister to cheating, in order to gratify their desire to hear of one another's welfare. It was easy enough in those days for any one whose attention was turned towards the subject to collect a mass of anecdotes of such cheating. Parents and children, brothers and sisters, lovers and friends, must have tidings of each other, where there is any possibility of obtaining them; and those who had not shillings to spend in postage, — who could no more spend shillings in postage than the class above them could spend hundreds of pounds on pictures, — would resort to any device of communication, without thinking there was any harm in such cheating, because no money was kept back from government which could have been paid. There was curious dotting in newspapers, by which messages might be spelled out. Newspapers being franked by writing on the covers the names of members of Parliament, a set of signals was arranged by which the names selected were made to serve as a bulletin. Men of business so wrote letters as that several might go on one sheet, which was to be cut up and distributed. The smuggling of letters by carriers was enormous. After all expenditure of time and ingenuity, there remained, however, a terrible blank of enforced silence. We look back now with a sort of amazed compassion to the old crusading times, when warrior-husbands and their wives, gray-headed parents and their brave sons, parted with the knowledge that it must be months or years before they could hear even of one another's existence. We wonder how they bore the depth of silence. And we feel the same now about the families of polar voyagers. But, till a dozen years ago, it did not occur to many of us how like this was the fate of the largest classes in our own country. The fact is, there was no full and free epistolary intercourse in the country, except between those who had the command of franks. There were few families in the wide middle class who did not feel the cost of postage a heavy item in their expenditure; and, if the young people sent letters home only once a fortnight, the amount at the year's end

was a rather serious matter. But it was the vast multitude of the lower orders who suffered like the crusading families of old, and the geographical discoverers of all time. When once their families parted off from home, it was a separation almost like that of death. The hundreds of thousands of apprentices, of shopmen, of governesses, of domestic servants, were cut off from family relations as if seas or deserts lay between them and home. If the shilling for each letter could be saved by the economy of weeks or months at first, the rarity of the correspondence went to increase the rarity; new interests hastened the dying out of old ones; and the ancient domestic affections were but too apt to wither away, till the wish for intercourse was gone. The young girl could not ease her heart by pouring out her cares and difficulties to her mother before she slept, as she can now, when the penny and the sheet of paper are the only condition of the correspondence. The young lad felt that a letter home was a somewhat serious and formal matter, when it must cost his parents more than any indulgence they ever thought of for themselves; and the old fun and light-heartedness were dropped from such domestic intercourse as there was. The effect upon morals of this kind of restraint is proved beyond a doubt by the evidence afforded in the army. It was a well-known fact, that in regiments where the commanding-officer was kind and courteous about franking letters for the privates, and encouraged them to write as often as they pleased, the soldiers were more sober and manly, more virtuous and domestic in their affections, than where difficulty was made by the indolence or stiffness of the franking-officer. To some persons, this aspect has ever appeared the most

important of the various interesting aspects of the other effects. postage reform achieved by Mr. Rowland Hill. As for others, it is impossible to estimate the advantages of the change. In reading Cowper's life, how strange now seems his expenditure of time, thought, and trouble, about obtaining franks for the manuscripts and proofs of his *Homer*; now, when every mail carries packets between authors, printers, and publishers, for a few pence, without any teasing solicitation for franks, or dependence upon anybody's good offices! What a mass of tradesmen's patterns and samples, of trade-circulars, of bills and small sums of money, of music and books, of seeds and flowers, of small merchandise and friendly gifts, of curious specimens passing between men of science, of bulletins of health to satisfy anxious hearts, is every day sent abroad over the land; and now spreading over wide oceans and across continents, through Rowland Hill's discovery of a way to throw down the old barriers, and break through the ancient silence! It was truly a beneficent legislation which made this change.

It was not easy, however, to make the change. Long after the case was rendered clear,—long after the old evils and the new possibility were made as evident as facts and figures can make any proposition,—there was difficulty—vexatious, even exasperating difficulty—in carrying the reform. One great obstacle at the outset was, that the Post-office has, through all time, declared itself perfect. As the Duke of Wellington declared of our representative system, that it could not be improved, while the grass and trees of Old Sarum were sending two members to Parliament, so the Post-office declared itself perfect when carts and saddle-horses carried its bags; and, again, when Mr. Palmer's mail-coaches—declared an impossible creation in 1797—brought the Bath letters to London in eighteen hours, and could take no notice of out-of-the-way towns and small villages; and, again, when a letter from Uxbridge, posted on Friday night, could not reach Gravesend till Tuesday morning; and, finally, when the state of postal communication in Great Britain was what has been indicated above. No postal reforms of a comprehensive character have ever originated in the Post-office itself. This is natural, because its officers are wholly occupied with its interior affairs, and cannot look abroad so as to compare its provisions with the growing needs of society. It required Rowland Hill. a pedestrian traveller in the Lake District, making his wayside observations, and following up the suggestion; an investigator, who could ascertain something of the extent of smuggling of letters; a man of an open heart, who could enter into family sympathies; a man of philosophical ingenuity, who could devise a remedial scheme; and a man of business, who could fortify such a scheme with an impregnable accuracy,—to achieve such a reform. The man was among us, and the thing is done.

Mr. Hill ascertained that “the cost of mere transit His facts. incurred upon a letter sent from London to Edinburgh, a distance of 400 miles, is not more than one thirty-sixth part of a penny.”¹ When this was once made clearly known to the people of London and Edinburgh, it was not likely that they would be long content to pay a shilling or upwards. It was not likely that rich merchants would be content; and much less the multitude to whom a shilling was a prohibitory duty on correspondence. It would strike them all, that, if government received such a profit as this on the transmission of letters, the government must be getting much too rich at the expense of letter-writers, and to the injury of persons who would fain write letters if they could. If it appeared, however, that the revenue from the Post-office was unaccountably small,—that it was diminishing

¹ Post-Office Reform, p. 14, 3d edit.

in actual amount, instead of increasing with the spread of population,—it was clear that the Post-office could not be so perfect as it thought itself; that it was not answering its purpose; that, whatever might be its mismanagement, and consequent expensiveness, there must also be an enormous amount of smuggling of letters. And the facts were so.¹ Between the years 1815 and 1835, the Post-office annual revenue had declined; while, on its own existing terms, it ought, from the increase of population, to have risen 507,700*l.*,—from the mere increase of population it ought to have risen thus much, without regard to the improvement of education, and the spread of commerce, which had taken place in those twenty years.

The way to deal with smuggling is now very well understood. To extinguish smuggling, it is necessary to lower duties to the point which makes smuggling not worth while. In some of the most populous districts of England, it was believed that the number of letters illegally conveyed by carriers, and delivered in an awkward and irregular sort of way at the cost of a penny each, far exceeded that of the letters sent through the Post-office. The penny posts established in towns were found to answer well. Putting together these and a hundred other facts with that of the actual cost of transmission of an Edinburgh letter, Mr. Hill proposed to reduce the cost of all letters not exceeding half an ounce in weight to a penny. The shock to the Post-office of such an audacious proposal was extreme; and so was the amazement of the public at the opening of such a prospect. As the actual cost of transmission to any part of the kingdom reached by the mail was less than a farthing, the penny rate might be made uniform,—to the saving of a world of time and trouble,—and still the profit or tax would be 200 per cent. Mr. Hill's calculation was, that, if the postage could be paid in advance, so as to save time and labor in delivery, and other facilities of communication be established, which he pointed out, and the postage be reduced to a penny for half-ounce letters, the increase in the number of letters, by the stoppage of smuggling and the new cheapness, must soon be fourfold. When it became fourfold, the net revenue, after defraying the expense of conveying franks and newspapers, would amount to 1,278,000*l.* per annum,—a sum only 280,000*l.* less than the existing revenue.² As no one supposed that the increase would ultimately be so little as fourfold, there was every prospect that the Post-office revenue would, in a few years, recover its then present amount directly; while it was certain that, under other heads, the revenue must be largely increased through the stimulus given to commerce by improved communication. Lord Lowther, the Postmaster-

¹ Post-Office Reform, p. 2.

² Post-Office Reform, p. 26.

General, had already proposed the cheap transmission of prices current, as important to the interests of trade; and, if the same advantage could be extended to all papers connected with commerce, there was no saying how great would be the stimulus communicated to business of every kind. When Mr. Hill proposed his plan, the revenue was in a flourishing state; in a state which would justify such an experiment as this for such ends. It is well that none foreknew the reverse which was at hand, and the long depression which must ensue; for none might have had courage to go into the enterprise: but that reverse served admirably as a test of the reform; and, through the long depression which ensued, Mr. Hill's plan, though cruelly maimed, and allowed at first no fair chance, worked well while every thing else was working ill. The revenue from the Post-office went on steadily increasing, while every other branch of the national income was declining or stationary.

Some years before this time, Mr. Charles Knight had suggested that the best way of collecting a penny postage on newspapers would be by the use of stamped covers. Mr. Hill now availed himself of this idea, acknowledging its origin. By means of a penny letter-stamp, the Post-office might be saved all the trouble of collecting postage, and the delivery be immensely accelerated. If residents in towns would have generally adopted his suggestion of having letter-boxes with a slit affixed to the inside of their street-doors, it would have been a further important saving of time,—the postman having only to drop the letters into the box, knock at the door, and run on, instead of having to wait for the answer to his knock. This piece of justice to the scheme is not yet practised nearly to the extent that it ought to be; but, notwithstanding this, and many other needless impediments to the transaction of Post-office business, the quantity of work done without increase of the staff is prodigious.

Mr. Hill had to endure something of the bitter disappointment which is the usual portion of great social reformers; ^{The move-} but, from the enlightenment of the age, his mortification. tions were neither so complete nor so durable as those of many benefactors of society. He first proffered his plan privately to the government.¹ Next, he published his first pamphlet on Post-office Reform, when the commercial world became interested at once, and forced the scheme on the indifferent and indolent Administration. Mr. Wallace moved, but without avail, for a select committee of the Commons, to investigate and report upon the plan, in February, 1838; the government declaring, in both Houses, that the matter was under their consideration. Petitions

¹ Polit. Dict. ii. p. 563.

came up to Parliament from chambers of commerce, the common council of London, the merchants and bankers of London, literary societies, and other bodies, which indicated to the Ministers that this was not a matter to be trifled with.¹ They showed their interest in a way which amused their friends and enemies alike, — by proposing little schemes, and alterations, and devices of their own, which proved only that they were very courageous in one direction, if not in another. They feared endangering the revenue; but they did not fear to place themselves and their little notions side by side with the man and the scheme in whom and in which the nation placed confidence. Neither they nor the Administration who succeeded them could see that the plan was a grand whole, which demanded to be left entire, and to be worked by him who had devised it; and both Cabinets were for pulling it in pieces themselves, or by permission to the old Post-office to do it, — being ready, all the time, to make its author responsible for the disasters that might happen through the very mutilation of the scheme. Mr. Spring Rice won for himself the title of “the footman’s friend,” given by a merry newspaper when he proffered his own little scheme of a new postage which should save flunkies the trouble of carrying ladies’ notes. When the special committee was granted, and up to nearly the close of its labors, in August, 1838, the chairman, — a government official, — and other members of his way of thinking, declared to their friends in the clubs and in drawing-rooms, that the present agitation would probably induce a considerable reduction of the rate of postage; but, as to the adoption of Mr. Hill’s plan, it was the most absurd idea that any one could entertain, — too absurd to be worth a reply. Some of these gentlemen continued to say the same thing till within six weeks of the introduction of Mr. Hill’s measure into the House of Commons by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the 5th of July, 1839.² The evidence obtained in committee was irresistible; the demand of a trial of the plan by the commercial world and the general public was irresistible; the pressure of reason and will together was irresistible; and the plan was affirmed by a majority of 102 in the Commons, and made law on the 17th of August following.³

The reform
made law.

Intermediate
method.

For a few weeks, a uniform four-penny rate was charged, that the Post-office might not be overwhelmed at once by a deluge of penny letters, before its officials had become accustomed to the new method of charging by weight; but, on the 10th of January, 1840, the real scheme was tried. The inland rate was now a penny for every prepaid packet not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in weight, and 2*d.* for every such packet not paid

¹ Hansard, xxxviii. p. 1099; xl. p. 901.

² Hansard, xlviii. p. 1365.

³ Hansard, xlix. p. 304; l. p. 369.

in advance; double the rate for packets above $\frac{1}{2}$ oz., and under 1 oz.; and 2*d.* more if prepaid, 4*d.* if unpaid, for every oz. or fraction of an oz. beyond. There was much amusing excitement everywhere about putting the plan into practice; some — but not enough — affixing of letter-boxes to house-doors; some mistakes, such as forgetting to prepay, — at which correspondents were wrathful, — or slipping a letter and a penny together into the box at the Post-office; a great stimulus to the manufacture of frank weights; and a great fertility of invention about envelopes, stamps, paper that could not be imitated, and gums that were warranted harmless and seemly. Mulready furnished a design for an envelope which had much merit, — but two great defects: it did not leave space for a long address, or one made long by the scrawling of the illiterate; and it rendered stale some signs of emotion which should never be made irreverently familiar, — as the uplifted hands and eyes of the widowed mother who is receiving a letter from an absent son. That envelope was soon laid aside, and the more convenient stamp introduced of the Queen's head in one corner. When this stamp became procurable either separately or on the envelope, and when its being on a blue ground came to denote its being a 2*d.* stamp, the machinery of convenience was at length complete to the public, as far as letters were concerned. The stamps came into use on the 6th of May. Franking entirely ceased on the day when the penny-rate was introduced; and the people were amused with the idea that the Queen herself was paying postage. This abolition of the franking privilege was declared by those who had previously been free from postage charges to be more felt by them than they could have supposed possible. They found their postage expenditure to be mounting up to many pounds in the year; and a multitude of them, who had not before considered the matter, now saw how right it was that the aristocracy should pay their share towards a tax which had hitherto never touched them, while it bore hardly upon the poorest in the land who could read and write.

The results of the plan after a year's adoption were as encouraging as could be at all expected under the unfavorable circumstances of commercial distress, and of the plan being tried by halves. The reduction of postage was tried, without the accompanying condition of improved facilities in the transmission and delivery of letters; and large expenses were incurred which had nothing to do with the new plan, but which went into the general account of the Post-office. The increase in the number of chargeable letters were two and a half fold, and these yielded more than half the former gross revenue of the Post-office; the increase of expense in connection with the plan was about 44,000*l.*, and the actual net revenue was 465,000*l.*, — a

falling-off of nearly three-fourths from the former net revenue.¹ Mr. Hill had predicted a state of things somewhat less favorable than this as the result of the first year's experiment, under these particular heads; but he had hoped that the profitable parts of his plan would have been tried, as well as those which must bring present loss. Those who understood the matter, however, had now no further doubt of ultimate success, even in regard to the pecuniary returns of the Post-office, while the increased facilities for business, for the promotion of science and the arts, and for family intercourse, were felt and acknowledged in the remotest corners of the British Islands. As Mr. Hill had himself the pleasure of knowing, "the postman had now to make long rounds through humble districts where, heretofore, his knock was seldom heard." As for the number of letters sent by post, it appears to have been at this time more than double what it was before the reduction of postage.² There was reason to suppose, that, if the plan was fairly tried, five years would suffice to restore the gross revenue of the Post-office, while the advantages to other branches of the revenue would be meantime perpetually on the increase. The proportion of prepaid letters was continually on the increase as people learned to manage their own share of the plan; and this incessantly diminished the labor of the Post-office. The transmission of small sums of money by Post-office orders was becoming more and more common, not only aiding the transaction of business, but carrying comfort into thousands of humble homes. The stamps themselves became a convenient form of small currency. The illicit conveyance of letters ceased at once, when the Post-office became the cheapest means of conveyance. Thus the prospect was cheering in every way but one. The one drawback was that the plan was not fairly worked. The Post-office authorities were hostile to the change; and neither the existing government nor that which succeeded it supported Mr. Hill. Even while he was engaged under the Melbourne Ministry, to superintend the working of his own plan, it was adopted only by halves; and immediately on the succession of the Peel Administration, he was dismissed, and the scheme left, as far as the public would allow it, to the mercy of the hostile Post-office authorities.

At the end of three years, no part of Mr. Hill's plan had been
 Further results. fully tried but that of the reduction of postage. Little was done towards the simplification of arrangements or the introduction of economy; and almost nothing in regard to increased speed in the delivery, or facility for the despatch of letters. The times were fearfully bad; yet, according to a return made to the House of Lords, the results were that the gross rev-

¹ Results of a New Postage, p. 13.

² Results of a New Postage, p. 7.

enue had reached two-thirds of its old amount, and that the net revenue of the Post-office was increasing from year to year, while every other branch of revenue was decreasing.¹ But Mr. Hill was only for a time cast out and discouraged. All parties became convinced at last, as the public at large were throughout, that he was essential to the working of his own plan; and he was solicited to return to his task of superintendence in the Post-office. Since that time, various reforms and beneficial arrangements have been introduced; and even his ultimate scheme of a parcel-post is in partial operation. In time, the nation will have the whole.

Meanwhile it hardly needs to be pointed out, that, though the fiscal results of the plan are those which must be first considered by Parliament and other branches of the government, they are not those which are most important to the nation at large. It is all very well that the revenue should rise to what it was before, and that increase should be perceptible in other branches of the revenue from the stimulus of aid afforded to commerce; but the nation is far more deeply interested in the operation of the scheme on the promotion of science, on the daily convenience to millions of persons, and especially on the domestic morals of the people. The blessings which have thus accrued are too vast for estimate. It is believed most firmly by those who know best,—by those whose walk is among the great middle and greater lower classes of society,—that no one has done so much as Mr. Rowland Hill in our time in drawing closer the domestic ties of the nation, and extending the influences of home over the wide-spreading, stirring, and most diverse interests of social life in our own country. And from our own country, the blessing is reaching many more; and cheap postage is becoming established in one nation after another, extending the benefits of the invention among myriads of men who have not yet heard the name of its author. The poet's shilling given in the Lake District was well laid out.

¹ Mr. Hill's Petition to the Commons, April 4, 1843.

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE of the last subjects of importance discussed in Parliament before the Melbourne Ministry went out of power was the privilege question, the origin of which has been related. On account of some amusing incidents which attended the discussion, and of the intricacy of the question, the press and the public treated the matter with a levity or an indifference which appear much out of place amidst the seriousness of an historical review. The grave truth of the case was, that an apparent incompatibility had arisen between the privileges of the Commons and the rights of the subject; and the Court of Queen's Bench and Parliament were directly at issue. The affair had become what is called a dead-lock. No one could see how a step could be taken in any direction but into deadly mischief; and yet it was necessary that something should be done.

In November, 1836, Chief-justice Denman had declared from the Bench his opinion that the authority of the House of Commons could not justify the publication of a libel; whereas the House and its officers maintained that the publisher of their reports was not subject to action for libel, as he published under the authority of the Parliament; and the question of the powers and privileges of Parliament could not be brought into discussion or decision before any other court or tribunal than Parliament itself, without subjecting the parties concerned to the displeasure and the penalties of Parliament for a high breach of its privileges. This was the decision arrived at by the special committee which reported on the subject in May, 1837.

The case now stood thus. Messrs. Hansard, the Parliamentary printers, had published certain reports on prisons, in one of which a book, published by J. J. Stockdale, was called "obscene and disgusting in the extreme." Stockdale prosecuted the Hansards for a libel. The Hansards pleaded the authority of Parliament. The Judge, Chief-justice Denman, declared that Parliament could not authorize the publication of libels on individuals. Parliament not only insisted that it could publish what it pleased, but that itself was the sole judge of its own powers and privileges; and that for any person to call them in question in any court was a

high breach of privilege. Both parties supposed themselves engaged in vindicating the liberty of the subject,—Lord Denman believing that he was saving individuals from being oppressed by the most powerful body in the realm; and the House of Commons believing that the liberty of the subject was essentially involved in the liberties of the representative and legislative body.

Stockdale continued his prosecution of the Hansards. The Hansards, who put themselves under the protection of the House, were directed to plead. The verdict was given against them, and damages were assessed, which the House directed the Hansards to pay; because, having pleaded, they could not repudiate the result of the trial.

On the 31st of July, 1839, the Hansards informed the House that they were threatened with a similar action by another person, in relation to another report. They were this time desired to take no notice, to make no preparations, as the action threatened would be regarded by the House as a breach of its privileges, and punished accordingly.¹ The matter was supposed to be settled by the person said to be aggrieved in the report, declaring that he had never had any intention of prosecuting the printers. But Stockdale was not quiet yet. Before August was out, he brought a third action for the same libel,—the sale of every fresh copy being considered in law a separate publication of the libel. The Hansards were directed by the speaker to let matters take their course; and they merely served Stockdale with a formal notice of the resolutions of the House of Commons of May, 1837, and August, 1839. The damages were laid at 50,000*l*. As the Hansards would not plead, judgment went against them by default; and a jury in the sheriff's court assessed the damages at 600*l*.

The sheriffs were brought into the affair solely against their will; and it was their embarrassing predicament which caused the mirth of the newspapers throughout the rest of the transaction. The sheriffs of London—together constituting one sheriff of Middlesex—were Messrs. William Evans and John Wheelton. First, they petitioned the courts to allow time, before the assessing of the damages, that Parliament might be in session; but no delay was permitted, and they were obliged to proceed to the assessment on the 12th of November. Stockdale then pressed them on, and they were compelled to seize the printing-office, premises, and stock-in-trade of the Hansards.² On their reporting, on the 29th of November, that they had done so, Stockdale served them with an order to sell the property, that he might obtain his damages. The sheriffs

¹ Hansard, xlix. p. 1101.

² Annual Register, 1840, p. 20.

were thus placed between two fires of wrath. The House of Commons was pledged to punish them, on the one hand, for daring to meddle with its printer; and the Court of Queen's Bench would punish them, on the other hand, if they refused to levy the money. Either the speaker would send them to Newgate, or Chief-justice Denman would send them to the Marshalsea. Again they asked for time; and some delay was granted — until the 19th of December — for making their return. The sale was fixed for the 17th; but, to avoid the scandal and other evils of the spectacle, the money was paid into the sheriff's court on the night of the 16th. To put off extremities as long as possible, the sheriffs delayed paying the money to Stockdale. The Court of Queen's Bench granted a rule, calling upon them to show cause, on the 17th of January, why they did not pay the money. Meantime, Parliament assembled; and, on the 16th, Lord J. Russell laid the whole case before the House, and pressed for an immediate decision of this perplexing and dangerous matter.

The House might now either follow its ancient method of asserting its privilege by committing those who had violated it, — in which case, it must commit not only Stockdale and his attorney, Howard, but the sheriffs and their officers, and the chief-justice and his coadjutors; or it might yield its privileges so far as to let the Hansards plead, and so permit the question of privilege to come before the courts; or it might yield another of its privileges by confining the circulation of its reports among its own members; or it might now pass a Bill to authorize such a publication of their reports as had been made by Messrs. Hansard. The one thing that was impossible was that the House could allow matters to remain as they were. It had, unfortunately, vacillated in its course, by authorizing the Hansards to plead in one case, and forbidding them to do so in the next, — and now it must repair the mischief of its own vacillation.¹

The House decided on asserting its privileges. For the sake of decency, or what was called public convenience, it would refrain from calling the judges to its bar, though it had indubitable power to do so. It would endeavor to stop the assaults upon its privileges by laying hold of the inferior officers who were acting in contempt. The sheriffs were therefore, as it was decided by a large majority, to appear at the bar of the House, bringing with them all the documents and authorities under which they had acted.²

On the next night, January 17, it was decided that Stockdale should be committed, under the speaker's warrant, for breach of privilege.³ On the 18th, the sheriffs were

The sheriffs
at the bar.

¹ Hansard, li. pp. 44, 49.

² Hansard, li. p. 101.

³ Hansard, li. p. 190.

brought up to the bar of the House. They admitted that the money was still in their agent's hands. They were ordered to attend again on Monday, the 20th. By that day, it became known that the Court of Queen's Bench would the next morning be moved to compel the sheriffs to pay the money to Stockdale; and the House must therefore act vigorously this night.¹ It decided to order the sheriffs to refund the money. The sheriffs were summoned to the bar, and appeared in their scarlet robes, when the speaker informed them of the order of the House, that they should refund the money, and invited them to speak, if they had any thing to say. They bowed in silence, and withdrew.² Lord J. Russell then moved the commitment of the sheriffs for contempt; but the subject was left over to the next day, when two petitions were presented from the sheriffs, praying that they might not be punished for endeavoring to do their duty under the orders of the Court of Queen's Bench.³ Their petitions were not received; and they were committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms. Stockdale's attorney, Howard, was called in; and, as he expressed sorrow at having offended the House, he was merely reprimanded and discharged.

Three days afterwards, the serjeant-at-arms came to the bar of the House to know what he was to do. He had been served with a writ of habeas corpus from the Court of Queen's Bench, commanding him to produce the sheriffs in that court.⁴ The House directed him to inform the court that he held them in custody for breach of the privileges of the House. He took them to the court, accordingly, to make this declaration. It was a remarkable scene, and one which would not safely bear a repetition. As the sheriffs in their robes passed along in custody, from their apartment under the House to the court, they were loudly cheered; and the lawyers in the court made no secret of their sympathy being with the prisoners. Everybody, of all parties, pitied them as victims in a quarrel about which it was no business of theirs to decide. The court declared the reasons of the serjeant-at-arms to be good and sufficient; and he took away his prisoners as he had brought them.

On the same day, the 25th of January, Stockdale, though in prison, commenced a new action against the Hansards, his agent being the same Howard who had just expressed his sorrow for having offended the House. Howard was ordered up again on the 27th, when the affair was next discussed; but Howard was not to be found. A warrant for his arrest was issued on the 4th

¹ Hansard, li. p. 204.

³ Hansard, li. p. 359.

² Hansard, li. p. 344.

⁴ Hansard, li. p. 549.

of February; and, on the 6th, he was brought up in custody, and committed to Newgate. The House had now two sets of prisoners in different places of confinement; and nobody could conceive what was to be done with them, or how any end of this embarrassing matter was to be reached. The House was so unpopular, that it was clear that the general public did not at all comprehend the nature and extent of the dispute. By some, Lord Denman was regarded as an audacious judge, setting up his judgment and his court against the mighty popular body of the Commons; while, by others, he was lauded as a defender of the rights of the subject against an overbearing Parliament. Everybody pitied the sheriffs, and everybody quizzed them. The print-shops were full of caricatures of them, — sitting in their well-warmed apartment, with a smoking dinner on the table, or in court-dresses, with a circle of admiring sympathizers pressing consolation upon them. Meantime, here, on the 7th of February, were matters as before at a dead-lock.

Sir R. Peel said that the time was now come for the ministers to propose some comprehensive course for extricating the House from its difficulty.¹ Lord J. Russell was responsible for the peace of the country; and, if he could say that he hoped to pass a Bill which should make the powers of the House certain and complete, he would undoubtedly have the support of the House. On being called to a division, the members decided not to release the sheriffs.² On the 12th, however, it was certified by the medical attendant of one of the sheriffs, Mr. Wheelton, that his patient's life would be endangered by a longer confinement;

Release of
Sheriff
Wheelton.

and Mr. Wheelton was released without payment of his fees. An attempt to procure Mr. Evans's discharge, on a plea of health, failed, two days; and, again, a fortnight afterwards. Then, on the 17th of February, there was notice of a fifth action of Stockdale against the Hansards; and the House passed a vote of censure and threat.³ There were more arrests; and the odium excited by these proceedings, while no progress was apparently made towards a conclusion, was so great, that the affair was now truly an alarming one.⁴

Critical state
of the case.

The time of the House was occupied, night after night, to the injury of public business; placards met the eye on the walls of London at every turn, all denouncing the tyranny of the House; and, in the country, the health of the sheriffs was drunk at public dinners with three times three. Everybody could see the tyrannical aspect of the affair, while few understood the supreme importance of the privileges of Parliament; and there were not many newspapers wise enough

¹ Hansard, lii. p. 67.

² Hansard, lii. p. 156.

³ Hansard, lii. p. 69.

⁴ Hansard, lii. p. 320.

to give the information. By this time, the public were saying and hoping that Parliament would be beaten at last; and this hastened the action of the House. Sir R. Peel was of opinion that it would be expedient now to resort to enactment; the House reserving to itself the power to act without it, if the process of legislation should fail. This was done. Lord J. Russell brought in a Bill on the 5th of March, by which it was enacted that the courts should stay all proceedings against any parliamentary papers, on the production of a certificate, signed by either the Lord Chancellor or the speaker, that such papers were printed by order of Parliament.¹ A clause in this Bill put a stop to the proceedings against the Hansards. The motion to bring in the Bill was carried by a majority of 149, in a House of 257. On the same evening, the House decided to discharge Mr. Sheriff Evans, under an injunction to attend the House on the 6th of April.²

Then the indefatigable Mr. Howard, Stockdale's attorney, instituted a prosecution against the officers of the House, for trespass in entering and searching his dwelling when they were in search of himself.³ The Attorney-general was for allowing this action to proceed, as the question turned on the fact, whether the officers had exceeded their duty or not. The House agreed with him by a majority of 91, though the solicitor-general and other eminent members were in opposition.⁴

In the Upper House, some of the Peers, besides Lord Denman, wished so to amend the Bill now sent up to them, as to restrict the power of publishing libels, and prevent the House of Commons from being the only authorized libeller in the country; but the majority saw, that, if this were to be done, the present was not the moment for doing it. Such a provision, made now, would be a confession of wrong, and a surrender, on the part of Parliament, which neither fact nor policy would allow. The Bill became law on the 14th of April. On the 15th, Mr. Sheriff Evans was released from his obligation to appear; and some of the minor recusants were discharged from custody.⁵ But the House refused to release either Howard or Stockdale.⁶ On the 14th of May, however, the House agreed, on the motion of Mr. Duncombe, to let them go. And thus the matter was said to be concluded.⁷

Every one felt that it was not a satisfactory, not a genuine, conclusion. The privilege of Parliament was not vindicated,

¹ Hansard, lii. p. 949.

² Hansard, lii. p. 1026.

³ Hansard, liii. p. 288.

⁴ Hansard, liii. p. 294.

⁵ Hansard, liii. p. 1081.

⁶ Hansard, liii. p. 1132.

⁷ Hansard, liv. p. 117.

nor the Court of Queen's Bench either justified or condemned.

Unsatisfactory conclusion. The particular case about publishing reports was doubtfully provided for, in the future, by a present act

of compromise; but nothing was settled about the right of any party to discuss the privilege of Parliament before the courts. Many openings were left for renewals of this painful and undignified kind of controversy; and perhaps the most important result was the warning given of this danger, and the hint to avoid, if possible, by the exercise of careful skill, temper, and knowledge, all occasion of collision between Parliament, with its privileges, and the courts which protect the liberty of the subject.

Imbecility of the Administration. When Parliament met for the session of 1841, there was some curiosity to know what the Ministers would do. Weak as they had long been, they were known to be weaker than ever, through some losses which had happened during the recess. They had now so often shown that they could adhere to office under circumstances apparently hopeless, — it was so evident that their fixed idea was that it was they who must govern the country, and that they relied on royal favor to the utmost extent to which it could go, — that a kind of wonder had grown up whether any thing could dislodge them, short of a dangerous manifestation of popular discontent; and it had become a matter of calculation how that discontent could be manifested in a manner least inconsistent with the public peace. The ministers themselves were now soon to point out the way.

Queen's speech. The speech was so framed as to make the address a matter of safe discussion. It was on domestic subjects that antagonism was most likely to arise; and the speech was confined to topics of foreign policy.¹ The most prominent subject of the session was the renewal of the powers of the poor-law commissioners for five years. After long debates and much wearisome and intricate discussion, the ministers obtained a majority; but the measure was dropped, with some others of importance, in the prospect of the dissolution of Parliament which presently ensued.² An alteration in the declaration taken by municipal officers, intended to open a way for Jews into corporation offices, was carried in the Commons, but thrown out by the Peers. When various measures had been brought forward by various parties, only to be negatived or thrown out, the time was come — the 30th of April — for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make his financial statement; and this, it was believed, would be the occasion which should decide the fate of the Ministry.³ It was known that the statement would be a melancholy one; and,

¹ Hansard, lvi. p. 1.

³ Hansard, lviii. p. 1458.

² Hansard, lvi. p. 451; lviii. p. 708.

while the country was speculating on how the government would get over this crowning difficulty, it was entertained — really amused — with one of the Whig surprises, which had by this time failed to do more than amuse or excite Finance. contempt, by Lord J. Russell giving notice that on the 31st of May he should move for a committee of the whole House to consider the Acts of Parliament relating to the trade in corn.¹

No stronger indication of desperation could be given than this. The Anti-corn-law League was becoming strong, and carrying the people with it exactly in proportion as it Last resort. spread knowledge of the case among them. This novel policy of the Cabinet was obviously a desperate snatch at a popular interest, — a last effort to recover popular support. The social determination to have a free-trade in corn was growing in strength from year to year; but the question was too important to be delivered into the charge of the Melbourne Ministry. There was as yet no such pressure from without as would make them earnest, and keep them steady, in the conduct of a reform so important. That the members of the Cabinet should all be true converts already, was wholly incredible; while it was only too credible that they would grasp at any means of popular support which should enable them to remain in office. If they, whose whole pretension was that of being Reformers, had not throughout seen the truth in regard to the corn-laws, they saw it now too late for their respectability. A conversion which might have been truly respectable in a Conservative Ministry placed under new lights, was in the highest degree suspicious in a Reform Administration which had been for several years in the illuminated position.² The elections were soon to show what the people thought of this demonstration; and meantime the House was in a state of high excitement.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer had to announce a deficiency of nearly two millions. Mr. Baring went back to The budget. Lord Althorp's propositions about the timber and sugar duties, by changes in which he hoped to secure an increase of 1,300,000*l*.³ For the other 400,000*l* required, he looked to the result of Lord J. Russell's motion on the corn-laws. The existing deficiency was to be made up by an issue of exchequer-bills, and a resort to savings-bank funds. It did not strengthen popular confidence in the Ministry that the revenue was now deficient, year by year; and that, instead of a remedy, loans were resorted to in time of peace. There was a prevalent discontent at Whig management of financial affairs; a prevalent conviction that the Whig Ministry could not manage financial affairs; and

¹ Hansard, lvii. p. 1294.

² Hansard, lvii. p. 1295.

³ Hansard, lvii. p. 1306.

a prevalent indignation that they kept in their own hands a business of such transcendent importance which they were incompetent to manage. During the month which was appointed to intervene between the introduction of the budget and of Lord J. Russell's propositions to alter the corn-laws, there was great agitation in the country. The ministers hoped, of course, to appropriate the aid of the whole Anti-corn-law party, and thus gave them time to organize their support; but there was as much commotion on the other side,—a commotion which extended itself into the House of Lords, where the Prime Minister was brought to acknowledge that he had changed his views, declaring that his former opinion was grounded on purely temporary circumstances; a limitation which he had certainly not been aware of when he declared, not long before, that the maddest of all the mad things he had ever heard of was the idea of giving up the corn-laws.¹

Fixed corn-duty proposed.

Lord J. Russell found it best not to delay his announcement of the terms of his motion beyond the 7th of May. On that night, he declared his intention of proposing a fixed duty of 8s. per quarter on wheat, of 5s. on rye, of 4s. 6d. on barley, and of 3s. 4d. on oats.²

The debate on the sugar-duties had to be gone through first. It lasted eight nights, and ended in the defeat of the ministers by a majority of 36, in a House of 598.³ It was universally concluded that now the ministers would resign; and the House was divided between indignation and amusement when the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose in his place, the next night of meeting, and gave notice, as if nothing unusual had occurred, that, on the Monday following, he should move the usual annual sugar-duties.⁴ Lord J. Russell then moved that the House should adjourn to that Monday. While the ministers were receiving the taunts of the opposition, amidst the silence of the Reformers present, the news spread along the crowded avenues of the House, together with the intimation that the corn-question was to be brought forward on the 4th of June. The policy of the ministers was now supposed to be to endure any amount of defeat previous to the corn-debate, and then to dissolve the House, in order to throw themselves upon the country as free-traders, when the agitation should be at its height. The whole country was immediately busy preparing for the elections; and Lord J. Russell indicated this as his reason for dropping the Poor-law Bill, saying that he would not give occasion for speeches in Parliament intended for the hustings. The annual sugar-duties were agreed to; Sir R. Peel declaring that the proper opportunity for defeating ministers was not on that occasion, but

¹ Hansard, lvii. p. 1375.

³ Hansard, lviii. p. 667.

² Hansard, lviii. p. 16.

⁴ Hansard, lviii. p. 676.

in the form of a regular vote of want of confidence.¹ This vote he obtained on the 4th of June, by a majority of one, in a House of 623 members.² His resolution was, "That Her Majesty's ministers do not sufficiently possess the confidence of the House of Commons to enable them to carry through the House measures which they deem of essential importance to the public welfare; and that their continuance in office under such circumstances is at variance with the spirit of the constitution." Lord J. Russell promised to make known on the next Monday the intentions of government; and on that day the avenues to the House were crowded as before.

Vote of want
of confi-
dence.

The ministers, or a majority of them, had agreed that their best course would be to relinquish all discussion of the corn-laws for the present; to take a vote of supply for the exigencies of the public service for some months to come; and then, as they could rely upon no more majorities in that House, to dissolve Parliament, and appeal to the country.³ They had tendered their advice to the Crown to lose no time in dissolving Parliament, and summoning a new one, in order to ascertain the opinion of the nation.⁴

As might be expected, the House emptied rapidly after this explanation; and members dispersed themselves over the country, to manage their elections. It was universally understood that this election was of the last importance. In 1835, Sir R. Peel's fine statesmanship failed, because parties were yet too strong for him,—too strong yet from the forces of the reform movement. His short administration had been of use in proving the increased liberality of his tendencies, and his good faith in purposing to maintain reforms actually and deliberately achieved. Since then, the Whigs had declined in power and repute; and they now held no place at all in popular expectation. It remained to be seen whether the popular choice of future rule would turn towards him or them; whether it might not appear to the nation at large, as it did to many individual observers, as probable that Sir R. Peel would prove truly a popular leader, as it was now clearly impossible that the Whig Ministry should ever be so again.

A small number of members remained in London to complete some necessary legislation; but various measures of importance were dropped.⁵ On the 22d of June, Parliament was prorogued by the Queen in person to the 29th of the same month; and, on the 23d, a royal proclamation declared the Parliament dissolved. The writs now issued were made returnable on the 19th of August.

Dissolution
of Parlia-
ment.

¹ Hansard, lviii. p. 710.

³ Hansard, lviii. p. 1264.

⁵ Hansard, lviii. p. 1595.

² Hansard, lviii. p. 1241; lviii. p. 706.

⁴ Hansard, lviii. p. 1274.

Such were the circumstances under which the thirteenth Parliament was dissolved, after a duration of four sessions, and nearly four years. How the nation would declare its opinions in the choice of the next was felt to be a matter of the deepest interest to the sovereign, the ministers, the land-owning Peers, and the suffering people.

CHAPTER XVII.

ONE of the strongest and most genial interests of the period now closing was the young Queen. If the kindness and open heart of William IV. had been refreshing after the temper and manners of his predecessor, the youthfulness and gayety of the new sovereign were now really exhilarating after the spectacle of so many years,—of a feeble old man in the royal carriage. At first, the Queen was in high spirits,—liking to see and be seen; driving in the parks when they were most thronged; dining at Guildhall; and saying, as she went down to open the Parliament, “Let my people see me.” There were smiles on her face, and she met nothing but smiles and acclamations. On that 9th of November, when she went to dine at Guildhall, London did not look like itself, with its gravelled streets, and avenues of green boughs and flags; and the old hall itself, usually so dingy and dirty, seemed to have grown young for the occasion,—brilliant as it was with decorations, with crimson cloth and silk, with flags and banners, and armor glittering among the innumerable lights. Under the magnificent canopy, in the gorgeous chair of state, was seen no portly elderly gentleman, fatigued almost before the festivities had begun; but the slight figure of the young girl, all health and spirits, who half rose and bowed round to her relations—her mother, her uncles, aunts, and cousins—when the health of the royal family was proposed. There were reviews in the parks, where all London seemed to have poured out to see the Queen, who, as was always said, “looked remarkably well,” and enjoyed the greetings of her subjects. Then there was the standing-room left for another spectator anywhere within view of any part of the pageant, and yet no accident of the smallest consequence happened from morning till night: an early morning and a late night; for the first rays of the midsummer sun that slanted down through the high windows of Westminster Abbey shone upon the jewels of whole rows of Peeresses, and upon scarlet uniforms scattered among court dresses, and church vestments, and splendid female array; and the illuminations of that night were not out when the next sun rose. It was a day of

great fatigue and excitement; but all present in the abbey defied fatigue, for all hoped that this might be the last coronation they might ever have the opportunity of seeing. The Sovereign herself was nearly the youngest person present; and the general hope was that she might live to be as old as any one there. The sensation on her entering was a wonderful moment. Before, a painful sleepiness had oppressed those who had sat so many hours in that strangest of positions, — idle, full-dressed, under bright sunshine, in a vast crowd; but the burst of music, rushing among the arches, and ringing from the roof, wakened up the senses and the soul in a moment; and all rose by one impulse to their feet, to see the small figures that passed in procession below, and the slightest of all, on which every eye was fixed. With all the support that loyal sympathy could give, it seemed as if the sovereignty must be cruelly oppressive; for here the antique conception of British regality pervaded the entire ceremonial, — regality which had immeasurably more of power and personalty in it than is true in our day. The service, if it had not been antique in its cast, would have been shocking, with its mixing-up of worship to God with homage to the sovereign, savoring of the old belief of divine right. The ancient Edward's mantle of cloth of gold looked cumbrous and oppressive, and the sceptre and orb too heavy; and it was a relief to remember that the regal power was not now what these symbols represented, and that the responsibility was lightened in proportion. Such as it remained, there was every indication this day, that, under this lessened responsibility, all support would be given that the affection of the people could yield.

Soon followed events which must have made these shows — even the greatest of them — appear trivial to the Queen's marriage. Sovereign. Her marriage ensued; and we find, in the registers of the time, notices of Prince Albert's name being inserted, by command of the Queen in council, "in all the prayers, liturgies, and collects for the royal family;" and of the Prince becoming a citizen of London in Guildhall; and, next, of the registrar of the Belgrave district being summoned to Buckingham Palace, to enter on the registration-books of St. George's, Hanover Square, the birth of a royal infant. The christening ensued, but not next in order; for, the day before, Prince Albert, while skating in the presence of the Queen and one lady of the Court, ran some risk from the breaking of the ice. He could not have got out by himself; but the ladies kept their presence of mind, and saved him. In another year, on the 9th of November, 1841, the heir to the throne was born. Amidst the general joy and congratulations, there were many who thought of the new-born child with pity and solicitude; feel-

ing that it is in our days no privileged lot to be born to a throne, even in England, where the limitation of the kingly power makes the throne safer than elsewhere. In a century overclouded by the approach of a war of opinion in Europe, princes are born to a life of toil and solicitude if they are to be made equal to their station, and to real evils—for toil and solicitude are in themselves no evils—if they are not made equal to their station. But here was the great immediate blessing that the Queen had a son; and all were ready to rejoice with her.

As for the state of the people, their condition had been declining almost from the beginning of this period to the end; and it was too clear that they were sinking still. State of the people.

The operatives were first employed half-time; then they had no work, and were known to be living upon their savings; then there were public meetings, to consider what could be done, and public subscriptions which came to an end while still no prospect opened; and then there were a thousand operatives employed on the roads in one place, and 5000, 10,000, 14,000 seemed to be merely waiting for alms or death in others. As usual, crime began to abound. Crime.

—horrible poisonings, combination murders, murders for purposes of theft, from the nobleman in his bed to the sawyer in his pit, abound in the chronicles of the period. New crimes arose, not bearing an immediate relation to the distress; as a vitiated atmosphere produces not only one frightful epidemic, but new or aggravated disease of other kinds. Ships were cast away, one after another, from wretches boring holes to sink them, in order to obtain the insurance. A plot for the commission of extensive forgery was matured and put in action on the continent, by a few scamps, hitherto called noblemen and gentlemen,—some Scotch, some foreign,—whose object was to defraud several European banks to a large amount, by forging the circular letters of credit of a London bank, and presenting the supposed letters of credit in various continental cities on the same day, or before communication could be established. The "Times" newspaper, having received early information of the plot, ran the risk of action for libel and other consequences, in order to put the commercial world upon its guard. It succeeded in this object, was prosecuted for libel, and condemned in damages of one farthing. Its bold course, both in giving warning, and afterwards in pleading justification of the libel, won for its proprietors the public admiration and gratitude, which were expressed in the form of a handsome subscription for a testimonial. The proprietors declined the testimonial for themselves, and testimonial. requested that the money might be spent for the public benefit.¹

¹ Annual Register, 1841, Chron. 363.

After two tablets, recording the facts, had been put up in the Royal Exchange and the office of the "Times," the fund was devoted to the establishment of two scholarships, to be given to youths elected from London schools to the universities. As

Game-laws might be expected, the game-law murders of the period were many and shocking. In the best times, there are hungerers enough in the rural districts to make it dangerous for gentlemen to preserve game at the cost of a vast amount of human food, consumed by hares and birds before the eyes of starving men; and, in a season of distress, the sight is one not to be endured. We find accordingly a long list of poachings and the consequent murders; and at the same time the most effective enemy of the game-laws in their stronghold, the House of Lords, died — too soon for this as for many another Lord Suffield.

good cause — Lord Suffield, who died in the summer of 1835, in his fifty-fourth year. Perhaps, if he had lived to this time, we might have been released from the game-laws, which are a disgrace to our law-books, to our practice of professing reform of abuses, and to the praise we utter in our churches of justice and mercy, and care lest we cause our brother to offend. Even these things are, however, less fearful than one manifestation of the time, which tells as much as the new practice of poisoning for the sake of payments from burial-clubs.

While the temperance cause seemed to be advancing everywhere, and tea-drinkings with speeches, and dances Opium-eating. with music and lemonade, were noticed in newspapers, almost from day to day, certain disclosures were made at a meeting of the Westminster Medical Society in 1839, which appalled the few who heard or attended to the information. The increase of the consumption of opium in England had led to inquiry. It was found that the abjuration of intoxicating drinks was little more than a set-off against the increased consumption of opium. The insurance offices were consulting how to defend their interests under this new peril to human life: they could guard against liability from opium-eating in future policies of insurance; but they found their capital in danger from the intemperance of persons already insured.¹ It was not only, nor chiefly, in the insuring class of society that the practice existed. It spread far more fearfully among the hungry. In the large manufacturing towns, the druggists now employed their spare minutes throughout the week in making up penny or two-penny packets of opium for sale on Saturdays, when hundreds of poor creatures would come to receive from the long rows on the counter the packet which was to give them stupor till the miserable Monday morning.

¹ Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 272.

The churches were active, as if trying all this time to heal these social woes. There was much building of new churches in London and elsewhere; and, while the desperate poor were emigrating in shoals,—getting away at all hazards from the sickening scene at home,—exertions were made by bishops and religious societies to provide for the endowment of bishoprics in the colonies. Much zeal was shown by the three great church societies for missionary objects, during the whole of this period, and noble sums of money were raised. But the misery and crime to be dealt with were not of a kind to be remedied by a provision for worship; and it was observable, that, while the existing churches bore a very small proportion to the population of their districts, they yielded more room than was occupied. Churches come of religion; but religion does not come of churches. An obstacle to “the operation of religion on the masses” was the intolerance of spirit which yet remained from the critical period which has been before described. The Peterborough bishop, Dr. Herbert Marsh, whose eighty-seven questions had first occasioned the open divisions in the Church, died at this time, in 1839, leaving the religious world yet heaving with the tempest, of which he furnished the first squall. The sects within and without the Church were yet quarrelling; the Catholics were increasing in numbers, founding new institutes, and building new chapels; Protestant clergymen were not only declaring at public meetings against grants to Maynooth, but detailing every instance of superstition they met with among poor Irish and other ignorant Catholics, to excite hatred against the priests.¹ Here and there, Dissenters were carried to prison for refusal to pay church-rates, which they were assured by lawyers could not be legally levied; while a pious ship-agent—who was happily defeated in the courts—was endeavoring to make deductions from the wages of the Catholic and Presbyterian among the crew, because they objected to attend the church-service on board ship; and a clergyman here and there was refusing burial to persons baptized by lay-preachers out of the Church, or by dissenting clergy.² And, as an illustration of the need there now is of provision for liberty of conscience in regard to oaths, a case occurred which did not tend to interest the poor and suffering in favor of religion, when an insolvent, a man “of good moral character,” entitled otherwise to his discharge, was sent back to prison, and kept from working to maintain his “starving children and unhappy wife,” because the commissioner could not administer the necessary oath to a person who, like this man, did not believe in a future

Church-
building and
bishoprics.

Religious
intolerance.

¹ Annual Register, 1840, Chron. 73.

² Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 278.

life.¹ The fault was not in the commissioner, nor yet in the man; for, if he had been capable of dishonesty, he would have professed the belief required for his enlargement. The fault was in the imposition of penalties for opinion; and it was one likely, as far as it was known, to operate in alienating the ignorant and the careless alike from the religion in whose name such things were done.

An incident was in the meantime happening which preached a softening and sanctifying lesson, uninterrupted by theological jars and social bigotry. In a light-house on the coast of Northumberland, within view of the Fern Islands, lived a family of the name of Darling. The night of the 6th of September, 1838, was stormy; and the "Forfarshire" steamboat, whose boiler was in bad order, struck on one of the Fern Islands, and parted in two. Darling, becoming aware of the wreck, at three in the morning, desired to put off in his boat, to render assistance; and his daughter Grace, a simple-hearted girl of twenty-two, prepared, as a matter of course, to go with him. The wife and mother, seeing how stormy the sea was, opposed their purpose, and at last consented only on the condition that she might share their peril. When they were stepping into the boat, her husband represented to her, that, by occupying a place in the boat, she would deprive one passenger of a chance for life; whereas, by remaining at home, she might be of use in making fires, and preparing blankets and clothes and food for those whom he might bring. She consented, and passed an agonizing hour while they were gone. By Darling's prudence, decision, and authoritative tone to the half-frantic survivors on a ledge of rock, he and his daughter accomplished the saving of nine lives. Grace thought nothing of her share in the deed, and never could understand the sensation that it caused throughout the kingdom. She always said, and truly, that there were girls all along the coast who would and did accompany their fathers and brothers to sea in storms, when they were called on to preserve life; and it is the noblest part of the noble lesson afforded by this event, that we are reminded of the virtue which lives and acts in quietness while the turbulent elements of human life and society are making tempests upon the surface. An event like this discloses to us occasionally the moral riches which shine in our depths; and then the fate of the unconscious revealer is something like that of Grace Darling. Her name flew abroad over the world. As she sat at her sewing in the little room in the light-house, the world came to pay her homage. The rich, the high-born, and the good, visited her. Those who could not come sent poems or books or money. The protection of her father was not enough

¹ Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 141.

under the pressure of suitors and worshippers; and the Duke of Northumberland made himself her guardian, took care of her money, kept an eye upon her lovers, and promoted, as far as he could, the quietness she longed for. But there was no more quietness for her. Her life had lost its simplicity, though her mind and manners never did. Her health gave way under the impossibility of repose; and she died in a few years,—as much a martyr to her own deed as if the boat had been swamped in its passage to the rock. Seldom has so tender a sorrow spread through the heart of the nation as when the newspapers told of the death of Grace Darling. She had found quiet, however; and a more intense image of repose can scarcely be presented than her monument, where she lies with her oar resting on her arm. That monument will preach a lesson of self-sacrifice, and rouse a spirit of heroic good-will, long after the sectarian strifes of the time shall have been forgotten.

We perceive, during this period, preparations making for the future welfare of the great mass of the nation, which are perhaps all the more hopeful for not contemplating ^{Agricultural associations.} so much as they will effect. While a terror of socialism and communism was spreading among the aristocracy; while there were debates in Parliament upon socialism in England, as if it were an aggression, and not a social symptom; and while thoughtful men, and those who had correspondence with the continent, were privately telling each other how communism was spreading under the surface all through France and Germany,—some of the English aristocracy were instituting an association from which more might be hoped than from perhaps any other institution whatever but a general system of education. The agricultural societies which came into action about this time may, however, be regarded as educational. While providing for the increased production of food, they provide also for the exercise of the faculties of the most ignorant and inert part of our population,—the agricultural laborers. The Anti-corn-law League was already educating a considerable portion of the people by rousing them to thought and sound knowledge on a matter which closely concerned them, and by teaching them to apply to the management of their public interests the same qualities with which they conduct their private affairs; and now the institution of agricultural associations promised to work in a somewhat similar manner on another portion of the people. The League disclaimed a party character altogether; and, in fact, though originated and chiefly sustained by Reformers, it included many Conservatives, and men of all shades of opinion in politics, as in every thing else outside the question of a supply of food. The agricultural associations, in like manner, proscribed political subjects at their

meetings. There were men of all political parties who saw, that, of all branches of industry in our country, agriculture was the most backward. They saw a whole world of science, chemical and meteorological, opening, which, in its application to agriculture, might mark a new era in our social destiny. They saw that no society can long hold together in which industry fails, as with us, to obtain a sufficiency of the comforts of life; and they believed that time might be gained for the consideration of our difficulty, if the difficulty itself could not be solved, by a largely increased production of food on our own soil. They believed that there was no surplus of labor within our bounds; but rather that, if science and good management were applied to agricultural as to manufacturing processes, the hands would be found too few for the work, and each part of the work would produce a larger proportion of food. If so, such Socialists, Communists, and Chartists as might still be bent on trying new principles and methods of society, would discuss the matter more coolly, more amiably, and much more cautiously, while feeling every year, in their state of improved welfare, that they had more to lose and less to gain by a fundamental change. Those who thus thought, hailed with a very serious delight the first and second annual meetings of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, which happened during this period,—the first being in 1839. Minor societies had existed for some time before. It was cheering to see, at these meetings, the Duke of Richmond and Lord Spencer walking in to dinner together, and high Tory and deep Radical chemists helping out one another's information about soils, and manures, and food for stock; and the rush to the ploughing-matches, and the stock-yards, and the implement-sheds; and even the road, "resembling the route from London to Epsom on a race-day."¹ "Such societies," as an observer remarked in a contemporary newspaper, "supply to the farmer what mechanics' institutes have supplied to the better sort of working-men,—a stimulus to inquiry, a desire for information, and a disposition to contribute from their own experience to any topic of the day. The farmers have been long enough blamed as isolated men, as enemies of education, and as the repositories of prejudice: what is better calculated to renovate them than agricultural societies?" And if these societies should so improve the production of food as to afford to a single generation, before it is too late, the leisure of comfort to consider impartially their own condition and the prospects of their children, they will assuredly take rank among the chief blessings of the time. They may be considered as one of the results of the peace; for they originated in the improvement of chemical science, and

¹ Spectator, 1839, p. 991.

the knowledge that a high order of agriculture existed abroad, — both derived from free intercourse with the philosophers and cultivators of the continent.

By the attention given to the growth of cotton in India, a prospect of manifold good was opened — to this country, its operatives, its manufacturers, and its consumers, from ^{India cotton.} our dependence on more regions than one for a supply of cotton; to the inhabitants of India, from the establishment of a new branch of production; and to the negro race, from American slavery becoming unprofitable when opposed to free labor. The East India Directors, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, some machinists, some private capitalists, and even the Governor-general of India, were at this time consulting and experimenting on the growth and preparation of cotton in India; and already the mountain-roads were reported to be blackened with bullocks bringing the produce down to the coast. Much remained to be done, and much still remains to be done; but the conditions are more and more understood, and the purpose holds.

A more ambitious and direct attempt on behalf of the negro race, made at the end of this period, failed, — owing to ^{Niger expedition.} the proud and headstrong character of the benevolence which prompted it. It has never been questioned of late years, that a principal method of supplanting slavery is by civilizing the Africans, and making an innocent commerce more acceptable to them than the trade in slaves. A few Liverpool merchants had for some years acted on this sound view, and had established a certain amount of commerce on the Niger, — conducting it with the caution and prudence which belong to private enterprises, — sending crews of seasoned whites and trained negroes, and appearing in a commercial character alone. Most unhappily, the idea was seized by some who were ill qualified to conduct such a scheme. Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton — so efficient, so successful, so thoroughly in his place in Parliament — went astray in this new enterprise; and its failure broke his heart. He put in action all his great social power, and we read in the chronicles of the time of public meetings, with Prince Albert in the chair, so crowded that persons were carried out fainting; of the gratulations and mutual praises of statesmen and prelates; of grand subscriptions and yet grander hopes.¹ Bulletins of the progress of equipment were published, and the names of officers and crews, and programmes of proceedings, and vivid descriptions of the model-farm, and the other monuments of the expedition, which were to arise on the banks of the Niger. All this time, the voice of warning did not cease; but those who should have been their guides in an enterprise which nobody else understood were

¹ Annual Register, 1840, Chron. 52.

slighted, and even insulted with insinuations that their opposition proceeded from sordid selfishness,—from a fear that their trade would be interfered with. Some of them would not be driven back from their object of saving as much misery as possible of all that they foresaw from the rashness and ignorance of the scheme as planned in London; and it was a steamboat of theirs which was hovering about the mouths of the Niger,—plying up and down the river for the purpose,—which saved the few survivors. The fever swept away the greater number of those who were sent forth to their death, or volunteered for it; the model-farm was deserted; and, worst of all, pledges made in the name of our Queen and country were necessarily left unredeemed, and remain so to this day. No one can say how far the civilization of Africa has been set back by the spectacle of our weakness and apparent bad faith, in a region where we should have gone in assured power, or not at all. Mr. Jamieson was one of the Liverpool merchants whose warnings were loudest and truest; and his steamer it was that saved the remnant of the expedition. His information was mainly derived from Mr. Becroft, who was familiar with the region; and it was Mr. Becroft who commanded the rescuing boat. The Niger Association did not at once dissolve. It had no more gifts of public money, and its subscriptions dwindled. When, at the meeting of 1842, Sir T. Fowell Buxton sent a letter and 50*l.*, instead of appearing, some taunts were uttered; but they were unjust. He was too ill to appear. By his Life, we learn that he strove hard for comfort in regarding the catastrophe as a mysterious dispensation, overlooking the grave faults which had made the issue any thing but mysterious to others; but he could not get over the shock. He never again held up his head. And he died in 1845, in the sixtieth year of his age.

The period exhibits more than usual disaster. In 1839, we “President” read of the christening of the “President” steam-ship, steamer. the most magnificent vessel of her kind ever seen in England. At that time, “several thousand persons” went in a day to Limehouse, to examine and admire. A year and a half afterwards, she did not return from an American voyage when expected; and nothing has ever been heard about her. For many weeks, the families of those on board were tantalized and tortured by floating rumors of her safety or of her fate; but, in two months, they put on mourning, and declared that they would hope no more. The fires that happened within these few years seem now, in the retrospect, to have been strangely destructive. In the dry season of 1835, a gipsying party, who had made their tea among the underwood on Wanstead Flats, neglected to put out the fire; and the consequence was a

conflagration which laid waste twenty acres of pasturage. It required the digging of a deep trench by a company of Sappers and Miners from Woolwich to stop the mischief at last.¹ Two or three weeks afterwards, the same misfortune happened on Clapham Common, where the villas of the neighborhood were for some time in great danger. Two acres of brushwood and furze were in this case laid bare. In 1838, while the destruction of the houses of Parliament was still fresh in men's minds, the Royal Exchange was burned down.² It was night before the fire, which must have been burning for some time, was discovered; it was a bitterly cold night, — the 10th of January, — with a north-east wind; and it took some time to thaw the hose of the engines when they arrived: so the flames spread and rose, illuminating the Bank, and other buildings near, till they seized upon the tower of the Exchange. The bells began to chime as stones and timber began to fall; and, of all airs, the one they chimed, was "There's nae luck about the house." They were chiming "God save the Queen," when one after another of the eight gave over and fell. The great city seal was found by searching among the ruins. Serious as were the consequences to the merchants of London, the loss which was most mourned was that of the old statue of Sir Thomas Gresham, which had escaped the great fire of London. Only small fragments remained of it now. The Grasshopper-vane was saved, and was reserved from the sale of remains which took place three months after the fire, when various curiosities, which could not come into use for the new Exchange, were bought up at high prices. In March of the same year, happened the most mischievous fire for its extent that can be conceived. A lawyer of the Inner Temple came home from his club at two in the morning, and left a candle burning near some papers.³ The papers must have caught; for from that spot spread a fire which consumed a mass of deeds and other documents, some of which will be missed for centuries to come. The Attorney-general suffered grievously. His library was worth 3000 guineas; but that was not the greatest part of his loss. Upwards of eighty chambers, with nearly the whole of their contents, were destroyed. In May, 1840, York Minster was on fire again, — by some carelessness of workmen, it was supposed.⁴ The next morning the nave was roofless, the belfry reduced to a mere shell, and the bells lying below, having burst through the floors in their fall. At the beginning of the next year, the Old Church at Camberwell was destroyed by fire, — nothing being left

¹ Annual Register, 1835, Chron. 127.

² Annual Register, 1838, Chron. 4.

³ Annual Register, 1838, Chron. 28.

⁴ Annual Register, 1840, Chron. 48.

but the bare walls; and, in a fortnight after, the princely residence of the Marquis of Londonderry,—Wynyard, in Wynyard.¹ The loss of pictures and antiquities was a matter of general concern. In Dundee, there was a fire which destroyed three churches; and the inhabitants, and half Scotland, mourned over the wreck of its old Cathedral.² At Dundee In June, Astley's Amphitheatre was burned down. Astley's theatre. As no one was aware that a life was lost,—a servant-girl having perished,—the interest of the spectators was about the saving of the stud,—Ducrow's famous stud. The horses were bent upon going into the ring, as usual; and it required no little gallantry and skill to save as many of them as escaped. The loss cost poor Ducrow his reason and his life.

Some less fatal shows offered themselves meanwhile. There was a passion for balloons; and in November, 1836, Balloons. three gentlemen enjoyed a glorious flight, from London to a village in Nassau,—480 miles, in seventeen hours.³ The passage over the dark sea, and the Belgian district of furnaces,—the sea of mist below in the morning, with the rustling of forests coming up like the sound of waves on the beach, the paling of the stars, and the gorgeous sunrise shedding its colors over the vast heavens, and the earth retired below, are described as inexpressibly solemn and beautiful. The next year, a foolish attempt to descend by a parachute from a balloon ended fatally; and, the year after, a more scientific attempt succeeded,—the voyager floating downwards for thirteen minutes after cutting the single cord that suspended him from the balloon.

There was a grand spectacle on the Thames, almost from end to end, in 1838, when the Lord Mayor, as conservator of the Thames conservancy. of the Thames, explored its course and condition in state-barges.⁴ The agitation against the defilement of the Thames by the filth of London had not then begun; and the processions and gratulations and strewing of flowers and feastings, belonging to “the business of the conservancy of the Thames,” went on through six days, as if the Thames were really preserved in good order. The civic ideas of this duty will probably have changed, before the next pageant of the kind is seen at Henley.—A piece of aristocratic pastime, “which had been two years in preparation,” took place at Eglinton Castle, in August, The Eglinton tournament. 1839, under the name of the Eglinton tournament. It was an imitation of the ancient tournaments; and no expense was spared to make it as like as possible to the old shows of arms. But such attempts never fully succeed,—never succeed in being more

¹ Annual Register, 1841, Chron. 22 and 28

² Annual Register, 1841, Chron. 3.

³ Annual Register, 1836, Chron. 150.

⁴ Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 119.

than child's play, like the "dressing up" in the nursery, — except in virtue of being a regularly perpetuated custom. The real antiquity which resides in such custom renders venerable the appearance of the champion at the coronation, and even endeared the grotesque devices and corporation practices which lasted in English towns till the Municipal Bill swept them all away. But in the Eglinton fête there was no such sanction; and, in spite of the host's expenditure of 40,000*l.*, the crowds who came, — some from a distance of 400 miles, — the personal charms of the queen of beauty, the valor and skill of the jousting knights, and the desire of every one to be pleased, there seems to have been a universal sense of failure. The weather was bad, and "the feudal appearance of the display was sadly marred by thousands of umbrellas;¹ . . . the queen of beauty and her ladies, instead of mounting their palfreys, were confined within their carriages." If ever mailed knight swore at the envious clouds, it must have been the young Earl of Eglinton on these critical days. — A more genuine piece of antiquity was presented in the case of an inquest held in Ireland on a body found in a bog. The bones powdered under the touch, while the muscles were so hard that the body bore the weight of Mummy inquest. a man, and substances rebounded from striking the limbs. Our mummy, it is true, could reckon only 100 years to every 1000 of an Egyptian; but there was something affecting in its being on our own ground, and yet more in an inquest being held on a being so mysterious, of whose ways and thoughts, and goings and comings, no man could tell any thing. There was a tradition of a suicide having been buried thereabouts, some hundreds of years before; but no one could say whether this were he.

If the Eglinton tournament was not regarded with popular respect, much less was the other lordly show of this Trial of a Peer. period, — the trial of Lord Cardigan, for duelling off-fences, in the House of Lords. There is little in the affair that any one would wish to dwell upon, or that needs be dwelt upon; though a cursory notice is necessary. Lord Cardigan, formerly Lord Brudenell, was from time to time coming before the public as the aggressor in some quarrel, — the public seeing that his antagonists in these quarrels were usually mild and gentlemanly men, of rank lower than his own in life and in the service. He was known to have connections at court, and interest at the Horse Guards; and no one could avoid the conviction, that, for these reasons, an amount of social misbehavior was passed over in him which would have immediately ruined almost every other officer in the army. After sundry adventures with his officers, in which their pride was wounded, their feelings exasperated,

¹ Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 153.

and their prospects ruined, by mess-room quarrels, tyranny on parade, and courts-martial, now on himself and now on an antagonist, Lord Cardigan fought a duel with a Captain Harvey Tuckett, and wounded him.¹ As he was arrested, there was no choice but to try him; and he was tried by his Peers amidst a parade and expense of which, according to universal opinion, the occasion was not worthy. Every one knew that Lord Cardigan would come off safe, — duelling being regarded as it still is in our country, and Lord Cardigan's interest having already borne him safely through worse perils; but no one could have anticipated such an audacious evasion of justice as actually took place. It was admitted that certain parts of the evidence related to Captain Harvey Tuckett, and that the person in court called by that name was rightly so called; but whether the one and the other was the same Captain Harvey Tuckett was professed to be doubtful, and supposed to be purposely left so. And thus the prosecution fell to the ground. It was not without its results, however. The mockery of justice, the lavish expenditure which thus became an insult to the nation, and the additional presumption now afforded that Lord Cardigan could not be thrown off by society, however he might oppress it, all went to deteriorate the position of the Peers in respect of the people, and turned the grand antique show of the trial into a very coarse modern offence.² The Duke of Cleveland's reply was not forgotten, when, instead of using the established form, "Not guilty, upon my honor," he said, "Not guilty, *legally*, upon my honor." Its significance was appreciated, though it did not go so far as the popular sentiment.

If any country-cousin of the next generation should observe that the summit of the London Monument does not correspond with the old pictures of it, he may learn that the grating, which by no means adorns the pillar, was put on in 1839, in consequence of two suicides having taken place in that year, within a few weeks of each other, — a young girl first, and then a boy of fifteen, having thrown themselves over.³ As fantastic suicides have an infectious character, it was suggested by some persons on the first occasion to obviate the possibility of another such act; and, after the second suicide, no time was lost in making all safe.

Since the establishment of steam-transit in the Eastern seas, great attention had been devoted to the improvement of India mail-communication. Many experiments of different routes were proposed, and some tried. Among others, there was an exploratory expedition to survey the Euphrates, in

Suicides from
the Monu-
ment.

India mails.

¹ Annual Register, 1840, Chron. 79. ² Compn. to the Almanac, 1842, p. 175.

³ Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 165, 205.

the hope that steamers might carry the mails by that river as far as Beles, 100 miles from Antioch, whence the way would be clear and easy enough. Two steamers were sent out in frame from Liverpool, with all needful materials and stores, and a picked company of officers and men; the whole being conveyed by the "George Canning" to the coast of Syria.¹ All went well; the vessels in frame were transshipped and carried in boats up the Orontes, and then over the desert, and then put together and floated on the Euphrates; and the river itself had been to some extent explored, when a tremendous hurricane capized one of the vessels — the "Tigris;" drowning fifteen of her men, and some natives. The survivors returned, impressed with the importance of establishing a free communication in those regions, by means of the great rivers, both for the transmission of the mails, and the opening of a profitable trade. They did not foresee how soon European travellers would be stumbling upon old Nineveh, and laying open treasures of antiquity, in whose presence people would forget that they came to see about India mails and the introduction of commerce. In 1840, the India papers told some striking facts about the consequences of improved communication with home, by steam or otherwise.² Within five years, the number of letters had doubled, though the inland rate of postage was still very high. The largest proportion of letters had before been sent through Calcutta; now Bombay was the letter-depôt; but the decrease at Calcutta was only 33 per cent., while the increase at Bombay was 500 per cent.

These changes may appear small in comparison with the improvements that have taken place since; but their importance was inestimable. If our route had been for ever by the Cape, the prospects of India — of the raising of the condition of millions of her natives — would have been far inferior to what they are now; and on the elevation of those Indian millions, — on the development of their free labor by their social progression, the fate of Africa and much of America appears to depend. It has been said before, but it can hardly be said too often, that the abolition of negro slavery everywhere, and the civilization of Africa, depend, to all appearance, on the kindly development of the resources of India.

Among the scientific facts put forward during this period, there is one which must obtain emphatic notice whenever and wherever it might occur. For a long time, some men Acarus
Crossii eminent in science had occasionally avowed that they found great difficulty in refusing evidence of the production of animal life by chemical agencies. It was no new thing for men who knew what they were saying to declare a belief that animalcules were

¹ Annual Register, 1835, Chron. 18. ² Annual Register, 1841, Chron. 42.

absolutely originated without any parents, in both liquids and solids, under certain conditions. In 1836, a philosopher was startled by an appearance which compelled attention to the inquiry whether such things could be. Mr. Crosse, whose name has been given to the acarus produced under the conditions detailed by him at a meeting of the British Scientific Association, "was looking for silicious formations, when animal matter appeared instead." In the midst of elements fatal to animal life, under the surface of a caustic fluid, within an enclosure from which the atmosphere had been driven out, and where there was no possibility that ova could have been deposited, or could have escaped destruction if deposited, insects appeared, after an electric current had been established for a sufficient number of months. Without the electricity, and without some other conditions, the insects have failed to appear. With those conditions, they have been produced again and again from that day to the present. If allowed to remain in the enclosure, they perish. If let out as soon as they appear, they feed, reproduce their kind, and live till the first frost, which is always fatal to them. At a lecture at the Royal Institution, in 1837, Mr. Faraday recommended the closest attention to the facts stated by Mr. Crosse, similar appearances having presented themselves to him, in the course of his electrical experiments; but he left it doubtful whether it was a case of production or revivification.¹ This all-important point was investigated by Mr. Weekes, of Sandwich, and again and again by Mr. Crosse, who is prepared with evidence regarding the formation of these animals, which cannot but command the attention of men of science, whenever they shall have left off attributing to him theories which he disavows, and opinions and sentiments which he never entertained. When the contempt and prejudice with which great discoveries are always received shall have subsided, it will be admitted that Mr. Crosse has merely made known, in the simplest manner, appearances which presented themselves to him, propounding no theory, drawing no inferences, and attacking no established belief. While, for thirteen years, too many, who might have tested his assertions, have been merely expressing contempt of them, he and one or two more have been diversifying their experiments as much as they could, and found themselves occasionally rewarded by the appearance of acari. Mr. Weekes baked the frame of his apparatus in a powerful heat, distilled the water, excluded the atmosphere by fumes constantly rising in a bell-glass, and subjected the silicate employed to a white heat.² Under these safeguards against the previous existence of animal life, he saw the liquid in his vessel grow turbid; he saw the gelatinous matter collect round the nega-

¹ Annual Register, 1837, Chron. 21. ² Vestiges of Creation, p. 189, 1st ed.

tive wire of his battery, which was immersed in the fluid; and he next saw one of the new insects emerge from the gelatine, and run off to a corner of the apparatus. Under the same electrical conditions, Mr. Weekes employed different substances, on account of one containing more carbon than another; and he then found, as he had ventured to hope, that more insects were produced when there was more carbon, and fewer when there was less. Mr. Crosse has persevered in his experiments,¹ and has detected the formation of the acarus from the first appearance of a minute white speck, through its gradual enlargement, till it puts forth the little waving lines which are to become legs, through its first indications of life, and its growth to that maturity which enables it to leave its birthplace, shift for itself, and propagate its kind. In connection with this, he has assured himself of the significant fact of the similarity of the first stages of the production of acari, and of certain mineral crystallizations, electrically produced. He finds the appearances of the white speck the same through the processes of enlargement and of putting out lateral filaments; but then, according to diversities of treatment, these filaments become, in the case of the mineral, rigid, shining, transparent, six-sided prisms, and, in that of the animal, limbs of a body endowed with vitality. These are results too serious and significant to be treated with either levity or anger; yet have they been received with too much of both. The objections made have been mostly of the *a priori* sort; and it is needless to say that they cannot withstand the evidence of experiment. Mr. Crosse's invitation to the scientific part of society is to join him in ascertaining, by every possible variety and patience of experiment, what is the truth of the matter; and, till this is done, his information remains the best that can be had on a subject of unbounded philosophical significance. As such, its first proposal for attestation is an incident worthy of special notice in a history of the time.

Several men of science died during this period. First, Captain Kater, who had borne an important part in the Deaths: Cap- trigonometrical survey of India, and had lost his health tain Kater. in the work. After his return, he earned, by many scientific services, his admission into almost all the learned societies in Europe, and died in 1835, aged fifty-eight. — The greatest of mathematical and astronomical instrument-makers, Edward Edward Troughton, died in the same year, possessed of the gra- Troughton. titude of the first philosophers of his age, who could not have effected their discoveries without the aid of his wonderful instru-

¹ The following statements, which are but a small portion of a most interesting exposition, are given, by permission, from a letter of Mr. Crosse to the author, bearing date August, 1849.

ments. — Pond, the astronomer, died in 1836. — In 1838, Dr.

John Pond.
Dr. Olinthus
Gregory.

Olinthus Gregory, professor of mathematics at Woolwich, was compelled to resign his chair, — his health being destroyed by excessive study; and he died in 1841. He was known throughout the world of science by many publications; and he had the honor of being one of the twelve founders of the Astronomical Society of London. — In 1836

J. L. M^r.
Adam

died Mr. M^r. Adam, the reformer of roads, whose name was familiar to every ear in England, till railways extinguished all interest in every other kind of road. Mr. M^r. Adam was a striking instance of the mental activity which is always ready to respond to opportunity. There have been many county magistrates and trustees of roads in our time; yet no one but Mr. M^r. Adam was effectually impressed by the want of scientific principles shown in the construction of roads. Once so impressed, this Ayrshire magistrate devoted his mind to the subject, and in his sixtieth year gave forth his plan, which was in use almost all over the country before his death, in his eighty-first year. — Two great surgeons died in 1840 and 1841, — Sir

Sir Anthony
Carlisle.

Anthony Carlisle, and Sir Astley P. Cooper. Sir A. Carlisle introduced some new surgical instruments of great value; he labored usefully in the field of comparative anatomy, aided by the sympathy and knowledge of his friend, Sir Joseph Banks; and he was the best friend and supporter of the Westminster Hospital, of which he was senior surgeon when

Sir Astley
P. Cooper.

he died, at the age of seventy-two. — Sir Astley P. Cooper's face and figure are familiar to all, through Sir Thomas Lawrence's fine portrait of him; and his was a face not to be forgotten when once seen. It indicated the power of intellect and kindness of heart which made him the greatest and most popular surgeon of his time. Great as was his fame as an operator, he perhaps did more good by his professional writings. When loaded with honors, rich, and growing old, he retired to the country, in pursuit of repose; but it would not do: he wanted some interests more stirring than those afforded by his library; and returned to London and to practice. He was still busy when death overtook him in his seventy-third year. When, in middle life, he removed from the city to the west end of London, his income was the largest ever heard of in the profession, — £21,000 a year. George IV. made him a baronet at his coronation, in 1821.

James Weddell, who in 1825 reached the highest latitude

James
Weddell.
Simpson.

known in the South Polar regions, died in ten years after his great feat, aged only forty-six. — A North Polar wanderer perished miserably in 1840, at a yet earlier age. Mr. Simpson, an officer of the Hudson's Bay Com-

pany, added many items to our knowledge of the polar coast of North America. He was returning from one of his expeditions, when, as is supposed, his reason was overthrown by anxiety and fatigue, and he destroyed himself, after having shot two of his companions. If he had lived, there is every probability that he would have effected more in completing the discovery of a North-west Passage than any other man; and an appointment was on the way to him which would have afforded him every facility. His loss is one of the most painful in the list of polar discoverers who have died in the search. — Captain Gerard, the India surveyor and scientific traveller, returned home, as such men do, with health much impaired; but he had wonderful things to tell of the untrodden passes and inaccessible heights of the Himalayas; many of which, however, he had contrived to explore, looking into Tibet on the one hand, and British India on the other. He resided for some years in Chinese Tartary, while engaged in surveying; and he obtained large information about the tribes, whose race and ways it is highly important to us to understand. But Captain Gerard did not tell us so much as he might have done of his Eastern experiences, though it is understood that he left a store of manuscript materials behind him. He died in 1839. — Another African traveller perished in the attempt to reach Timbuctoo, during this period, — Davidson, who had made exploratory journeys in all the four quarters of the world, and desired to crown his enterprises with a feat more difficult than any he had yet accomplished. He had measured the pyramids, both of Egypt and of Yucatan, and could instruct painters in their painting of panoramas of Madras, Thebes, Jerusalem, and Mexico; but he had further set his mind upon reporting of Timbuctoo. He was murdered by Arabs when about twenty-five days' journey from his object. He is remembered in London by his lectures at the Royal Institution on Egypt and Palestine. — The traveller on the Lebanon sometimes turns aside to visit a desolate grave in a garden, eight miles from Sidon; the grave of Lady Hester Stanhope, commonly called "the eccentric." She was a niece of William Pitt, and lived in his house for some years; but the greater part of her life was spent in the East, where she went in a spirit of pride, where she gained at first wonderful influence by her imposing pride, and whence she had too much pride to return, after she had discovered the hollowness of her authority. In an age of improved science, hers would have been a less unhappy lot than it was. It appears that her case was one of those, now known to be far from rare, where those faculties operate naturally which are usually put in action by animal magnetism. She and her adherents knew nothing

Captain
Gerard.

J. Davidson.

Lady Hester
Stanhope.

about this, and she had just enough power of insight and foresight to suggest some idea of her being inspired, and to keep herself and her servants in a constant and painful state of doubt whether she was inspired or not. She saw and knew some things which others could not see or know; she had curious glimpses of pre-science; but she could not depend upon her powers, nor always separate—any more than others of her class—realities from mere dreams. So, some called her a prophetess, and others called her mad, and others believed her merely ill-humored. She did not know herself what she was, except that, as must be feared, she was helpless and miserable. She passed her latter years in seclusion, in a house she had built on one of the spurs of Lebanon; distrusting her neighbors and servants, partly feared and partly disliked by them, and deserted when sick and dying. An interest attaches to her from the contrast of her early and later life, from the adventures she had gone through, as a kind of chieftainess of the Arabs, and from the peculiarities of her powers and temper,—an interest which she did not win through the affections. But there was a sense of relief when her death was announced in England,—a sense of comfort that that restless and mysterious mind was asleep, and past the power of annoyance from without and misgiving from within.—Sir Sidney

Sir Sidney
Smith.

Smith's name is associated with the East in most men's minds, from his command having lain repeatedly in the Mediterranean, from his operations in Egypt, and from his great feat of saving Acre when Napoleon marched into Syria. He was a great man in his profession, the first in fame of living British admirals at the time of his death; but there are some who remember him for something else than this,—for his attempt to obtain from the Vienna Congress, in 1814, the abolition of the slave-trade, and the disarming of the piratical States of Barbary. He died at Paris, in his seventy-seventh year, in May, 1840.

If we look at the political department of society, we shall see that Death grouped his victims strangely at this time.

Some were as usual called away who appeared to belong wholly to a former period. The Princess Augusta died in 1840, in the same year with her brother's favorite, Beau Brummell, who had once made such a noise in the world, but who died abroad, destitute and drivelling; another Beau Brummell added to the long list of warnings of the fate of court favorites. This was an extreme case; both the sovereign and the favorite being steeped in the vulgarity which belongs to frivolity and sensualism in an age of enlightenment and a post of high duty. But, vulgar as were the pair, the one did make the other the fashion, and the author of fashion, and then cast him off; or, as some say, compelled Beau Brummell to cast him off.

The favorite's last triumph was "cutting the prince." Having done this, he retired to insignificance and poverty, sinking gradually into idiocy and death. When his death was announced in England, people turned their eyes towards the court as it is now, with its centre and heart of simple domestic life, and were glad that the old court dandies were gone, and that the national offence and disgrace of court dandyism was buried with them. — Another favorite of the same prince, — his wife, as she was considered by all who looked at the matter in any other light than that of the Royal Marriage Act, — Mrs. Fitzherbert, went, too, at the age of eighty. She was married to Mrs. Fitzherbert. the prince by the rites of the Catholic Church; and she was regarded with entire respect by the royal family, and therefore by the rest of society, till the day of her death. It must have been with a strange mixture of painful feelings that she watched from her retirement the fortunes of her husband, in his marriage, his conjugal discontents, and his fatal error in bringing his Queen to trial. When she had watched them both to their graves, her own early life must have appeared like a former state of existence.

After the idols of power went those of wealth. The richest man and the richest woman in the world died in 1836 Mr. Rothschild. — Mr. Rothschild, and the Duchess of St. Alban's. Mr. Rothschild, "the greatest millionaire of the present or probably any other age," met with no more homage than might fairly be his due. He obtained his wealth by the exercise of faculties respectable in their way; the political power he held was a *quid pro quo*, — a natural exchange for financial services; and he spent his money generously and with discrimination. Such deference as waited upon him, he might naturally have enjoyed in any other period of society in which he could have gained his wealth by commerce, and lent it to government. It was in the other case that the offensive and humbling English worship of wealth was most broadly exhibited. The Duchess of St. Alban's would never have been noticed in so- Duchess of St. Alban's. ciety but for her wealth. Her early life, when she was a third-rate actress, and in no way distinguished by beauty, talents, or conduct, would have prevented her being heard of, if she had not, by marrying a rich banker, become the wealthiest woman of her time. She next married a foolish young Peer. His rank gave her no dignity, and her wealth could bring upon him nothing but contempt; yet do the newspapers of the time record all the proceedings of the pair, and the nobles of the land competed for the privilege of their visits. There was much hollowness in it. We know by some things that passed at Abbotsford, that the Duchess was made to feel that she was

ridiculed and despised; but this makes the mammon-worship more, and not less offensive, by showing that the worship itself was thought a fitting subject for hypocrisy. This woman — for, though a duchess, she could not be called a lady — had qualities which might have made herself and others happy under more favorable circumstances. She was truly good-natured, and had abundance of energy. Her munificence, when she was wealthy, was made honorable and trustworthy by the fact, that, when she was a very poor actress, she had shared all she had with those who were in yet greater need. She had made cheap baby-linen with her own hands to lend because she could not afford to give. This early beneficence communicated its grace to that of an after-time, when, having given away in every direction that could be thought of, she still laid by 40,000*l.* a year.

One pair of friends who went nearly together were the old Duke of Bedford. Whig comrades, the Duke of Bedford and Lord Holland. The Duke of Bedford did great good by his liberal encouragement of art and the arts; and his memory will be preserved by the Bedford drainage, the rebuilding of Covent Garden Market, and Woburn Church tower, and the sculpture-gallery at Woburn Abbey; but a far higher respect attends upon his surrender of borough property and influence, by his promotion of parliamentary reform. — Lord Holland was the most

Lord Holland. accomplished of the Whig politicians of his time. None of them understood the principles of reform, or could conceive of fully carrying out as much as they knew; and he was of the number of halting reformers. But he was, of all the statesmen of his time, the most distinguished vindicator of religious liberty. He had self-knowledge enough to be aware that even on this, his strongest point, he needed instruction and guidance; and he sought them; and, when his grasp of any principle was once fixed, it was an unrelaxing one. On every occasion on which the rights of religious opinion came into question, his vote and his testimony are found on the side of equal liberty; and, when he could do no more, he recorded protests which are worthy of study for their clearness, temperance, and conclusiveness. He was in his sixty-seventh year when he died, and the Duke of Bedford in his seventy-fourth. — The Marquis Camden died a few days before Lord Holland, — revered for

The Marquis Camden. an act as patriotic as the Duke of Bedford's surrender of borough property. Lord Camden filled several state-offices respectably; but all his other honors pale before that of his having surrendered emoluments from a sinecure office to the amount of a quarter of a million. There are, doubtless, many men in England capable of a sacrifice like this, and of making it with the grace of quietness and simplicity, as Lord Camden

did; but those men are not ordinarily found in the class of aristocratic politicians. To aristocratic politicians it usually appears a matter of course that offices and emoluments exist for their acceptance and benefit. To Lord Camden it appeared, that, whatever others might do, he could not feel easy to receive emoluments from the office of teller of the exchequer, without doing any work; and he paid the proceeds into the treasury for a long course of years.

Two restless men—Henry Hunt and William Cobbett—would henceforth agitate no more. They died in 1835, Henry Hunt. and the world was the quieter for their departure. William Cobbett. It is usual to mention them together, because they

pursued the same calling of political agitation at the same time; but there was little resemblance in the men. Hunt had not Cobbett's ability; he had not either Cobbett's clearness of thought, or weight of matter, or power of delivery. Hunt was a mere demagogue; Cobbett was that, and a man of genius too. As for the integrity and disinterestedness and truthfulness of either of them, there is nothing to be said. They were undisguised self-seekers in the midst of their complaints on behalf of the human race, and ostentatiously violent and exaggerated in their statements. The difference is, that Hunt gave us nothing more, while Cobbett gave us clear views on many things; strong stimulus to thought and action, and endless amusement, if the painful sense of his untrustworthiness left any power of enjoying it. Hunt was sixty-two at the time of his death; and Cobbett seventy-three.—One of Hunt's victims, Watson the elder, died in America soon afterwards.

He was a weak man, who would never have gone into James Watson. the Spa-fields riot, nor any other, but for Hunt's seduction; and he seems to have had no more power than inclination to lead others astray, except under such instigation. After his acquittal at the treason trials of 1817, he attended Hunt's meetings in a quiet way, till the disclosure of the Cato-street conspiracy, when he went to America; not because he was at all implicated in that plot, but because he probably had had enough of unavailing sedition.—With one more name we seem to dismiss Reynolds, the spy. the period of sedition, as connected with the spy-

system. Sedition we have, and shall have, while the great labor and food question remains unsolved; but, if the ferocity on the one side remains, the cruel meanness on the other—the employment of government spies, who must always be tempted to create the treason by which they are to profit—does seem to be over. Unless we are yet to be deprived and re-barbarized by a long war, it is not to be supposed that a spy-system can ever again be dreamed of by any minister, because it would not be

for a moment tolerated by the nation. Reynolds, the United Irishman, who betrayed the Dublin conspirators of 1798, died at

Paris in 1836. — One survived him who could look

back a good deal further, to a time of yet more fearful commotion, — a ploughman who was ploughing a field at Culloden when the Pretender marched by to the battle. When Robertson saw Prince Charlie, he must have been twenty years old, as he was 114 at the time of his death in 1839. — By his side, old

Lady Cork. Lady Cork, who died the next year, must have appeared young and sprightly. She was “the lively

Miss Monckton” whom we read of in Boswell’s *Life of Johnson*; and lively she was to the end. — It was time now that we were letting the last century go. While younger men were passing

away, leaving, however, finished works for their monuments, some of the busy men of the last century had lingered till now; and they were dropping off at last. Among the younger men

who were yet, however, far from youthful, were Sir Robert Grant. Robert Grant, twin-brother of Lord Glenelg, who,

after some useful service at home, became Governor of Bombay, and died there in 1838; and Lord William Bentinck,

who was Governor-general of India for ten years, and did much for the civilization of the natives, by the discouragement of the suttee and infanticide, and other barbarisms; and

Sir Wilmot Horton. Sir Wilmot Horton, who made some improvements in colonial administration while Governor of Ceylon; and Lord Henley, who was the first in the field of

church reform in the crisis of 1832; and Mr. Barber Beaumont, who, in 1806, established the first savings

bank, from which — then called the Provident Institution — the whole savings-bank system has arisen. Of the aged,

the remains of the last century, two passed away, with whom

seemed to be buried the very life of their time; and

also Sir John Soane, who, as architect, built the Bank and the College of Surgeons; and, as patriot, left his art-recollection to the nation, — the gift being confirmed by act of Parlia-

ment. The two eminent above all these, old or young, were the fortunate brothers, Lord Stowell and Lord

Eldon.

These fortunate and united, and yet not happy brothers were sons of a Newcastle tradesman, of the name of Scott. They were destined to find and appropriate all that life could give of advancement, professional honors, enormous wealth, and influence proportioned to their powers and success together; and they were destined to find that these things do not make men happy. A more impressive revelation can hardly be presented than in the life of Lord Eldon, of the suffering of a narrow and timid

mind, with a presumptuous and jealous temper. An experience of this kind is no surprise in the absence of such remarkable intellectual ability, and such decent morals, as distinguished these brothers. The impressiveness of the lesson consists in the evidence given of the insufficiency of these things for wisdom and peace, when comprehensiveness of views, liberality of principles, and generosity of temper, are absent. Once introduced in London, William, the elder, then Dr. Scott, carried all before him in his profession. He was called to the bar in 1780, and in ten years held, or had passed through, half-a-dozen high legal offices. In the Commons, he was a valued government member; and he was to have been raised to the peerage in 1805, but some intrigue came in the way, and kept him a commoner for another sixteen years. He had been made judge of the High Court of Admiralty in 1798; and he remained on the bench thirty years. His only son died two months before him; but the old man was beyond the reach of any other affliction than his own imbecility. He was ninety when he died, in 1836. He had had many good things in life, and tasted of intellectual pleasure in a high degree; but there is no evidence of his having even conceived of the loftier satisfactions which are the gift of faith, hope, and charity. Like his brother, whom he brought into his own path of the law, he had no conception of human progress,—no hope but of keeping things as they were, a hope which every day of his later life disappointed,—and none of that enlarged charity which is unsuspicious of evil, and forgetful of self. Of professional success, Lord Stowell deserved all that he obtained. He is considered the highest English authority in the departments of ecclesiastical law and the law of nations. His expositions of intricate questions of large compass were so luminous and complete, as to give to his statements the character of revelations of the law, and to his judgments the dignity of oracles. He appears not to have been troubled with his younger brother's infirmity of indecision; and when excuse is made for Lord Eldon's delays of justice, on the ground of the comprehensiveness of his views, Lord Stowell's example may be quoted in proof that sagacity and largeness of view may be combined with decision and efficiency.

As for Lord Eldon's delays, there is no doubt that they were made the most of by political opponents, by the sufferers under those delays, and by popular rumor, which sprang from these sources. There is no doubt, also, that Lord Eldon was right in his allegations, and correct in his proofs; that, by means of his long and cautious study and deliberation, estates had been preserved or restored to their right owners, which would have been given to the wrong party by a more hasty judge, on a more

superficial review of the case. But it is also impossible to deny that there was a large overbalance of evil on the other side,—a vast destruction of property, and infliction of misery, from the protraction of chancery suits, and an engendering of a contempt and dislike of the law far more revolutionary than any of the acts of reform which Lord Eldon held in such painful dread. There can be no doubt to those who read his *Life*, that the action of his mind was much impeded and deranged by his self-regards,—his cowardly anxiety about other people's opinions of him, his jealousy of his friends, and his fears of his enemies; while his insolent mis-judgment of the people at large was perpetually throwing him out in the exercise of his judgment. His legal learning was never surpassed, if it was ever equalled; and his judgments may be all the more valuable for being so long waited for. Such benefits as he left behind him in this form are no more than a compensation for the mischief he did in his political capacity. Throughout a long life, he was the great obstructive,—the grand impediment in the way of improvement,—the heavy drag upon social happiness in the country which he professed to love so well. It was a national misfortune that political power should rest in the hands of one whose mind was so narrow, whose temper was at once timid and insolent, and whose heart, if ever he had one, had wasted and withered early in life. He was always fumbling for his heart and his conscience, as if to make sure that they were safe; and he chuckled over them as a miser over the gold pieces he can jingle in his fob; but the more he chuckled over his hoarded heart and conscience, the less use they were to anybody else, till at last the world doubted whether he had either. The memoirs of his life present him as the prince of egotists; and as he had lived the life, he died the death, of the egotist. As he more and more viewed all things in their relation to his personal complacency, and as the world did not slacken its course as age and infirmity withdrew him from its activity, he suffered more and more from jealousy and discontent. There was less of his graceful playfulness, and more of watchfulness, fewer jokes, and more suspicions and pets, till even his vigilant life could keep awake no longer; and he had to leave his fields and his woods, and the fame and authority he had so long and tenaciously vindicated, and content himself with those deserts which he estimated so highly, and those pleasures of conscience which he had incessantly spoken of as of a kind of special grant from Providence to himself. When he was gone, the nation anxiously acquitted itself of its obligations to him; the kingdom echoed with acknowledgments of his ability and learning, and praise of his political consistency; his pale face and feeble form were missed in the House of Lords, and in the law-courts his

name was ushered in with compliments; but there is no doubt, that, if it had been possible, everybody would have been as sorry to see him back again as to witness a revival of the times of which he was the animating spirit. The posthumous homage was not hypocritical; it sprang from the uneasy desire to do justice all the more conscientiously, because the heart gives no help. Lord Eldon died in January, 1838, in the eighty-seventh year of his age. — His old comrade, Lord Sidmouth, ^{Lord Sidmouth.} was almost as old; past eighty when Lord Eldon died. He was gradually declining in health, though not in clearness of mind. He was always an amiable man, even when spending his days in setting traps for conspirators, and hunting traitors. He did those things as an indubitable professional duty. When he had done, he enjoyed a serene conscience, free from misgivings as to his dealings with the ignorant, the hungering, and the exasperated. His business was with the throne, and not with the people. He thought his successors unaccountably rash and supine in ceasing to coerce the people, and therein to guard the throne; but he had done with business, and it was their affair. So he resigned himself gently to infirmity and decline; looked upon Lord Eldon's departure as a reminder that he must soon follow; and died, when he had reached Lord Eldon's age, in February, 1844, — twenty years after his retirement from official life.

Zachary Macaulay died during the period under review, one of the most strenuous laborers of the friendly company ^{Zachary Macaulay.} who toiled so hard for the abolition of slavery; and his and Wilberforce's friend, Mr. Simeon, the originator of the Evangelical movement at Cambridge, by which so ^{Charles Simeon.} much was done in the way of the purchase of advowsons, to fill the pulpits of the Establishment with men who should revive the spirit of religion in the lukewarm Church. Mr. Simeon held the same living at Cambridge for fifty-three years; and saw, before his death, in his seventy-eighth year, such a revival in the church as he had little anticipated; a revival — partly incited by his own — of the High-Church spirit which has always hitherto been found incompatible with human liberty, and hostile to peace on earth, and good-will to men. At Mr. Simeon's funeral, 2000 mourners followed the coffin, and his departure was regarded by his adherents almost as that of an apostle. — Joseph Lancaster, who invented and tried the method of ^{Joseph Lancaster.} mutual instruction in schools before Dr. Bell, — though the system is usually named after Dr. Bell, — died by an accident in the year 1838, being run over in the streets of New York. Both men should have the credit, such as it is, of the system, which they appeared to have invented independently.

From the musical world we lost at this time, in 1837, Stevens, whose glees are sung everywhere, from concerts at

R. Stevens. Windsor to little gatherings in workshops and water-parties; and, in the same year, another of the Wesleys, now fast dropping away from us. — Samuel Wesley, nephew of John, and

Samuel Wesley. brother to the musical genius Charles, had the true Wesley organization, disposing him to a life of piety expressed in music. His life on earth was no cheerful one. His head was injured by a fall in his early manhood, and from that time he was subject to long visitations of religious melancholy. He became a Catholic, and music was his solace; and he has left some which may beguile others of the sorrow of which he knew

Thomas Attwood. so much. — Thomas Attwood, Mozart's pupil, died in 1838, leaving two coronation anthems, and a mass of other compositions by which to be commemorated. He was organist of St. Paul's for many years; and afterwards, for a short time before his death, organist of the Chapels Royal. He was chorister of the Chapel Royal, when his ability drew the attention of the Prince of Wales, who bore the expense of his musical education on the continent, in the course of which he formed his intimacy with Mozart.

Wilkins, the architect, who built the University Club-house, St. George's Hospital, and the National Gallery, in William Wilkins. London, and collegiate buildings at Cambridge and Haileybury, died in 1839; and, in the next year, Sir Jeffrey Wyatville, whose father and two uncles were architects Sir Jeffrey Wyatville. of the name of Wyatt. The change of name was a device of George IV., to distinguish his favorite from his uncles. The renovation and improvement of Windsor Castle are his great deed, and that with which his name will ever be associated; but he left works also in thirty-five out of the forty English counties, and four out of the twelve Welsh. Though much might be said of these if Windsor Castle was out of sight, they are almost lost in the presence of that noble achievement, which is justly a cause of pride to the nation. The architect reached his seventy-fourth year. His likeness remains, not only in Sir Thomas Lawrence's portrait, but in a bust in the long gallery at Windsor, where he, if any man, deserves a place.

William Holl, the historical and portrait engraver, died in 1838; and Bewick's apprentice, Nesbitt, whose wood-engravings did ample honor to his master. — Hilton, who succeeded Fuseli in the charge of the Royal Academy, and who was eminently beloved and respected by the pupils there, died in 1839. — And in the same year, Turnerelli, the sculptor, who gave us the celebrated figure of Burns at his plough, for the poet's monu-

William Holl.

Charles Nesbitt.

William Hilton.

Turnerelli.

ment at Dumfries.—And we lost Daniell, to whom the untraveller owe so much of their conception of Indian scenery; and G. Stuart Newton, who brought his talent from his home in Nova Scotia, and cultivated it in Italy, and was rapidly maturing it in London, when insanity overtook him, and broke up all the purposes of his life, and at length his life also. He recovered his reason when his strength was too far gone to admit of his rallying. He was in his fortieth year.—Westall, second only to Stothard in fame and employment as an illustrator of books, died in 1837; and, in 1839, Sir W. Beechey, who was old enough to have been the favorite portrait-painter of George III. and his Queen, and to have enjoyed a great range of aristocratic practice before the uprising of Sir Thomas Lawrence. —Another aged artist died in 1840,—Alexander Nasmyth, the father of the Scottish school of landscape-painting. Besides his landscapes, however, he has given us something of great value, in his portrait of his friend Burns, of whom we should otherwise have no good picture.—His countryman, David Wilkie, died, too soon, in the same year. It may be that we had had the best of Wilkie, and that no new style that he could ever attempt could yield such results as that which he had forsaken,—that of his best years, and by which he is best known; but still his death at fifty-six, on his return-voyage from the East, when his mind was full of ideas and images of which we were to have had the benefit, was felt to be a national misfortune; and the mourning within and without the world of art was wide-spread and sincere. The groups round print-shop windows, in all the towns of the kingdom, proved that it was not necessary to belong to the world of art to enjoy Wilkie's pictures. His "Village Politicians," his "Rent-day," his "Cut Finger," and "Rabbit on the Wall," his "Reading of the Will," and many others, are as well known to hundreds of errand-boys and homely tradesmen, and persons who were school-children in his best time, as to the owners of the pictures themselves. Wilkie was the son of an humble Scotch clergyman. He had travelled in the East during the year before his death,—sank suddenly under a feverish attack, after leaving Gibraltar, on his return, and was buried at sea.

Of the actors who were favorites in the last century, there were few remaining now; and death was fast making them fewer. Blanchard died in 1835; and, in the next year, Jack Bannister, of whom Garrick predicted great things as a painter, but who changed his style of art from motives of filial duty, and became an actor,—not thereby losing Garrick's friendship, but gaining instruction from him. There

William
Daniell.

G Stuart
Newton.

Richard
Westall.

Sir W.
Beechey.

Alexander
Nasmyth.

David
Wilkie.

Blanchard.

Bannister.

was much regret among players when Jack Bannister took leave of the stage in 1815; and some of this feeling remained to do him honor, when, after twenty years more, his death was announced. It was Bannister who recommended Fawcett to Colman as his successor; and Colman thought that in Dr. Pangloss, in Colman's own play of the "Heir-at-Law," Fawcett excelled Bannister. And now Fawcett, Colman, and Bannister all left the world within half a year. Colman wrote for Mrs. Bland in all his musical dramas, if indeed his musical dramas were not written for Mrs. Bland; and now she went too, at the beginning of 1838. — The writer of several favorite pieces, played in the days of this group of actors and ever since, — "A Cure for the Heart-ache," "Speed the Plough," and others, — Thomas Morton, the dramatist, died at the same time with his old friends; and he was presently followed by another dramatist, popular in his day, — Boaden, the biographer of the Kembles. Charles Mathews had ventured upon the stage before the last century was out; but it was in his boyhood, and without his father's knowledge. As an established actor, he belonged to our century, his first decided success being subsequent to 1810. Being lamed by an accident, and finding his wonderful imitative faculty more genially and freely exercised in such entertainments as those called "Mathews at Home" than in regular acting, he became the kind of performer that we all remember. Probably no man called out more mirth in any nation than Mathews among us, who do not laugh enough; or among the Americans, who laugh more than we do, but still not enough. Mathews could make all hearts merry but his own. His health was bad; and visitations of epilepsy in his early life left him subject to depression of spirits which nothing could clear. While imitating all he saw and heard, wherever he went, as if the spirit of fun was always overflowing, his heart lay heavy within him. No one knew better than he, that, while the wit of one man is related to the mirth of another, the two capacities are not necessarily connected in the same individual. As a man may be mirthful without wit or fun, so a man may have wit and fun without mirth; and poor Mathews would often, like many other wits, have been glad to exchange his mirth-exciting powers for the mirth he excited. He died on his fifty-ninth birthday. When the elder generation is boasting of the dramatic favorites of the last century, the young people are usually deciding within themselves that the favorite of their own day could never have been surpassed; and, at the time before us, the young lovers of the musical stage were content to hear of the pets of their parents while they could go and listen to Malibran. She

Fawcett.

Colman the younger.

Mrs. Bland.

Thomas Morton.

James Boaden.

Charles Mathews.

Malibran.

was not English by birth ; but she became English by education and through her hearty adoption by the English people. Her childhood was hard and laborious ; and her genius broke forth in wildness of exertion and of mirth by turns. She hardly knew what repose was ; and she died of exhaustion at the age of twenty-eight. She was a wonderful creature ; able to achieve whatever she attempted, and able to aspire to more than most people could conceive. The unhappiness of her life no doubt stimulated her professional exertions, and helped to wear out her frame. She allowed herself to be wedded, when very young, to an elderly French merchant at New York, M. Malibran, who soon afterwards went to prison for debt. She believed herself deceived, gave up her marriage-settlement to his creditors, and returned to Europe, where, in 1836, at Paris, she obtained a divorce which set her free to marry again, which she did at once. In six months afterwards she was dead ; and in two months more, died her first husband. Her labors, and the wearing kind of toil consequent upon fame, had long been undermining her strength ; and at the Manchester Musical Festival of September, 1836, she sank, after having thrilled the souls of the audience with her last strain, "Sing ye to the Lord." Her voice, and the mind that it carried, thrills yet, and ever will, in the hearts of those who heard her most worthily ; and the youngest of these will boast of her to their grandchildren as old men now magnify the Siddons, and, in the dearth of opera, the Catalani of their day.

When a man of business is a man of letters, and finds himself equally at home in London drawing-rooms and in the counting-house, he contributes a large portion to the respectability of his country, where such a union of pursuits is not so common as it ought to be. Richard Sharp, commonly known as Con-
Richard Sharp.
 versation Sharp, was a man of this order. He was partly occupied with commercial concerns, and left behind him upwards of 250,000*l.* ; yet Sir James Mackintosh declared him the best critic he had ever known. He published letters and essays which justified his position as a man of letters ; he had a seat in Parliament for several years, and was the associate of the most eminent literary men of his time. He died, in old age, in 1835. —
Alexander Chalmers.
 Alexander Chalmers died at this time, — the indefatigable editor of a host of works, and writer of the greater part of the "Biographical Dictionary" which goes by his name. He is remarkable for literary industry rather than for any other merit in his contributions to literature. — A quiet, modest, but most eminent public benefactor, who died at this time, was
Robert Lemon.
 Robert Lemon, of the State-paper Office. Everybody knows how, in rummaging among dusty and neglected papers, he found Milton's manuscript ; but few know how much else he found

among the cobwebs. To his industry and sagacity we owe the rescue from rot and oblivion of a mass of valuable materials for history; and also such a reform of our care of State-papers as may save us from quenching the historical lights for which we are answerable to future generations. The India Company was at one time very near purchasing the services of Mr. Lemon from the State-paper Office; but Lord Sidmouth, made aware of his value by his superiors in office, increased his salary to an amount on which he might live decently; and perhaps the future histories of England may be of a far higher, and those of British India of a somewhat lower character, for this appropriation of 200*l.* per annum. It was Mr. Lemon's labors that suggested to Sir R. Peel the appointment of commissioners to examine and publish such State-papers as were lying neglected; and Mr. Lemon was the secretary of the commission thus obtained. The first publications were of the documents of the reign of Henry VIII. — Sir William Gell, the classical antiquary, who opened to us so much topographical illustration of ancient historical scenes or fictions, died in 1836, at Naples.

Death swept away, during this period, a whole group of distinguished orientalists. Dr. Carey, the missionary, died in 1834, at Serampore; and, a few weeks after him, Dr. Morrison, the eminent Chinese scholar at Canton. The lapse of time lessens our confidence in the results of missions to the East, and of negotiations with Oriental powers, by revealing more and more of the difficulty of rapidly acquiring the Oriental languages so as to be able to employ them in such serious affairs as the uprooting of old religions, and the negotiation of political or commercial alliances. It is now well known to many, that shocking errors have existed throughout in our translations of the Scriptures into Eastern languages, and that it is difficult for a missionary preacher to utter a discourse without conveying something that it would make his hair stand on end to be aware of; and it is well known that miserable misunderstandings, from English blunders about Chinese proclamations, precipitated, if they did not cause, the Chinese war. When, therefore, we read of Dr. Carey's success in giving the Scriptures to forty nations or tribes, each in their own tongue, we may well doubt how far they really were the Christian Scriptures that were given them; and, in the case of Dr. Morrison's catechisms and tracts, how far his ideas could be communicated to the Chinese. But beginnings must be made. The zeal and benevolence of both men were unquestionable; and their learning was no doubt as reliable as the times permitted, and certainly greater than that of any other men known among us. One important part of their work was the establishment of

colleges and other institutions, by which preparation is made for a more real and less dangerous intercourse with the Oriental mind hereafter. Dr. Carey reached an advanced age. Dr. Morrison died in his fifty-third year, from the consequences of exposure on the Canton River, while acting as interpreter to Lord Napier amidst the disastrous transactions which will have to be presently related. — Sir Charles Wilkins was one of the ^{Sir Charles Wilkins.} first English students of Sanskrit; and he it was who originated our Bengalee and Persian publications, by his ingenuity and skill in preparing the requisite types with his own hands. This was in the last century, for he was eighty-five when he died in London, in 1836. His son-in-law, Mr. Marsden, ^{William Marsden.} also a great Orientalist, followed in the next year, leaving us much new knowledge about Sumatra and the Malayan Archipelago, several dictionaries and grammars of Eastern languages, and a singular collection of Oriental coins, which he presented to the British Museum. He was but little younger than his father-in-law, having attained the age of eighty-one. He presented his noble library to King's College, London; and resigned, because he did not want it, his rewarding pension of 1500*l.* a year. This was an honorable life of industry, usefulness, and disinterestedness. — The most eminent Chinese scholar left after these losses, Thomas Manning, departed also in 1840. ^{Thomas Manning.} The mystery which hung about China when he was young, so completely took possession of his imagination, that he could attend to nothing at home but the studies which might fit him for exploring the forbidden land. He qualified himself as highly as was then possible, went out to the East, and tried long and often, and always in vain, to penetrate China, either by Canton or through Tibet. He got in at last, in the train of Lord Amherst, in 1816. His first publication, when he was quite young, was on algebra; and he would have been eminent as a mathematician, if China had not come in the way. The readers of Charles Lamb's letters know how jealous he was of the China, — the unrepaying China, — which deprived him of Manning's society for so many of the best years of their lives.

Charles Lamb had already been some time gone when Manning died. That gentle genius, heroic and genial, enjoying and suffering at once, — sportful and enduring, — noble and frail, — loving others as an angel might, and himself beloved as an infant and a sage in one, — departed while he could yet ill be spared, before he had passed his sixtieth year. He was one who could never, at any age, have been willingly spared while his mind could work and play, and his hesitating speech could convey its burden of thought, and pathos, and wild wit; but his special work in life — the guardianship of his ac-

^{Charles Lamb.}

complished, but infirm and dependent sister — was not done, when an accident — a fall, whose consequences were fatal — disposed of the matter, and gave a new tenderness to the pathos, and a solemnity to the wit, of the “*Essays of Elia*,” which had been read before under a hope, that, while Elia lived, we might have more. Charles Lamb was an exquisite ornament of his time, — as he would have been of any time; and he was its serious benefactor, too, in as far as he called out and fostered the spirit of geniality, in which, above every thing, our time is deficient. There seems to be a prevalent impression that he was of greater mark than his writings will account for; and this is probably owing to the spirit of those writings being far higher than their pretensions, — that they were so instinct with genius, that their form, and even their amount, is a matter of little concern. — An aged lady died in 1838, whose name should not be omitted, though it belongs only to the lightest order of literature, and had long lost the great distinction it had once enjoyed, — Mrs. Grant, of Laggan. Her “*Memoirs of an American Lady*” were interesting before the United States were as familiar to us as they are now; and her “*Letters from the Mountains*” are a good example of the epistolary style in literature. She lived to feel extreme surprise at the American colonists for daring to desire a separation from England, and at the seditious tendencies of English society which could countenance the presumption. She lived, as was natural, in the scenes of her youth, as regarded both America and Scotland; and her readers dwelt upon the achievements of her youth, in acknowledging their obligations to her. She was eighty-four when she died.

Her countryman, John Galt, was, like herself, a highly popular writer in his day, and, like her, could not reconcile himself to the state of things on the other side the Atlantic. He lived for some time in Canada, but was involved in such disputes as he was too apt to find grow up about him; and he is most pleasantly remembered by his Scotch novels, — the “*Ayrshire Legatees*,” the “*Annals of the Parish*,” the “*Entail*,” and others. He died in 1839. — The Irish novelist, Gerald Griffin, died in the next year, — young, but having ceased to write novels. After giving us the “*Collegians*” and “*Tales of the Munster Festivals*,” he retired to a monastery, and devoted himself to religious observances for the short remainder of his days. — In the same year Madame D’Arblay went the most popular of female novelists, however we may wonder at the fact. Fanny Burney happened to reach her prime at that period of the last century when conventionalism had touched its last limit of excess. She was herself full

of life, and of what would have been naturalness at any other time than that in which she lived. She was too full of vigor and ability to be silent; and the result is, that she has given us full and faithful pictures of the conventional life which to her appeared natural. It is now scarcely possible to read her "Evelina" and "Cecilia," with all their elaborate, delicate distresses, which could never have happened to ingenuous people, and which a breath of good sense and sincerity would at any time blow away in a moment; but the enthusiasm about these novels in their day proves that they were true to their time, and that they ought so far to have value with us. In her youth, Fanny Burney was evidently charming, — with her heart, and her wit, and the touch of the hoyden mixing curiously with her innocent and conscientious prudery. But, at last, her fame was too much for her. It led her into the service of royalty, which is not a natural consequence of literary fame; and she was not suited to the position, nor the position to her. The artificial part of her character overgrew the natural; and her later writings are unreadable from their affectations. Her precious heart must have become sadly impoverished before she could employ herself, as she did in her latter days, in revising for the press the affectionate family and friendly letters which had passed between herself and persons long dead, and in arranging, while on the very verge of the grave, in which we look to bury our vanities, the records of the interminable and extravagant compliments paid to her half a century before by kind-hearted great men, whose follies of the moment should have perished with the moment. We owe to her, however, in these "Memoirs," gratitude for a great service. Her gossiping volumes are full of interest, of unconscious revelations of herself, far more charming than all her consciousness, and of historical material, from her familiarity with the court, and with most of the eminent persons of her day. Miss Burney married, at forty, an emigrant artillery-officer, being sure at any time of large sums of money for any novel she chose to write, and actually receiving 3000 guineas for the first she wrote after her marriage, — "Camilla." She survived her husband and only son, and died in her eighty-eighth year.

Two popular female poets departed untimely during this period, — Mrs. Hemans, who was in her forty-second year; and Miss Landon, known in the world of letters as L. E. L. Mrs. Hemans died in Dublin, in 1835, after a long illness, and after a separation of many years from her husband, who left chiefly to her the charge of their five sons. Miss Landon married, and went out to Cape Coast, — somewhat wilfully, but under a sense of duty, and died there suddenly, a

Mrs. Hemans
and Miss
Landon.

few weeks after her arrival at the castle, — as was supposed, by taking an overdose of some deleterious medicine. A more mournful story than hers is seldom heard, — illustrative as it is of the perils, snares, and sufferings of a literary life, where the responsibility of the vocation is not felt with the seriousness which shames cupidity, and silences flattery. People inferior to herself made money and amusement out of her talent and herself; and she permitted them to do it, — partly out of careless generosity, and partly because she was too little aware of the responsibility of genius. Carefully cultivated, her genius might have accomplished great things. As it was, her early and wonderful facility is nearly all that remains for admiration. By her personal friends she is remembered with an affection which has nothing to do with her writings; and, by those who did not know her, her writings are regarded with an indifference almost as great as her own. — Mrs. Hemans's poetry was of a far higher order. It was deformed by a mannerism of that degree which is fatal to permanence of popularity; and there is not much substance of thought. But the sentiment is commonly as true and natural as the expression of it is otherwise; and of a depth which always insures its freshness. The substantial power of Mrs. Hemans is, perhaps, best shown in her choice of the subjects of her smaller pieces, which is so rich in suggestion, and so full of the keen and sagacious apprehension that belongs to genius, that it is almost a greater treat to look over the table of contents of her minor poems, than to read the poems themselves. Her fame — a genuine and reasonable fame, depending upon her qualities, and not upon any accident of the time — had spread widely over the European and American continents many years before her death; and there are thousands living to whom the slightest casual recollection of some of her poems will be, to the day of their death, like the singing of a dirge in the recesses of their hearts. — Thomas Haynes Bayly, whose songs were sung in the streets, and who was therefore a public benefactor, died, in his forty-second year, in 1839; and, in full age, James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, — a man of stubborn purpose and graceful imagination, of unscrupulous manners and delicate sentiment; a man who taught himself to write with such labor, that he began his task by taking off his coat and waistcoat, but who produced his songs with such facility, that they seem to have presented themselves to him like a group of sun-touches on the prominences of his native valleys and hillsides. His life was one of painful vicissitudes, from his want of prudence, and of knowledge of the world. The "Queen's Wake" is the poem which established his fame, and by which he is best remembered; but perhaps a

T. Haynes
Bayly.

James Hogg.

stronger interest attaches to him from his intimacy with Sir Walter Scott, and a far stronger still from the circumstances of his origin, and rise in life to a high place among the authors of his time.

Mr. Lodge, who contributed, by his famous portraits and other works of antiquarian biography, to future achievements in the department of history, died in 1839, ^{Edmond Lodge} holding the office of Clarenceux king-of-arms. — Dr. Gillies, who gave us a history of Greece, and translations of much Greek oratory and philosophy, had ceased his labors ^{Dr. Gillies.} for many years, and now, in 1836, died in his ninetieth year. — In the same year, we lost James Mill, best known ^{James Mill.} as the historian of British India, but also celebrated as the chief follower of Bentham, and the author of works on mental philosophy and political economy. His “History of India” is the work by which he will be longest and best remembered. He held an office in the India House, which afforded him access to a great wealth of materials; and he so wrought his mind into his task as to have strengthened and illuminated his narrative with principles of legislation, and views of social organization, which gave his work a value that nothing can supersede. We may and must have others, written by men who have seen India, and who can contribute much that did not lie in Mr. Mill’s way; but nothing can now prevent his being the history which first presented the great subject of India to the best part of the mind of England, and largely influenced the administration of that great dependency. It is a well-known virtue of the India Company that they discover and employ and reward the best men, in a way that administrative bodies very rarely do. In this case, as in others, their generous prudence was richly rewarded; for Mr. Mill was able to do more for their empire than they, with all power and willingness, could do for him.

A man of great celebrity died at the close of 1834, — of a celebrity out of all proportion to the knowledge of his works. Mr. Malthus was perhaps the most abused man of his time; but he was so well aware that the abuse never ^{Mr. Malthus.} proceeded from those who had read his writings, that it did not trouble him, nor in the least impair the sweetness of his temper, or the quiet cheerfulness of his manners. It was he who first placed, clearly and by elaborate statement, before society the all-important fact which lies at the bottom of the poverty of society, — that the number of consumers naturally presses upon the means of subsistence; and that, while the numbers and the means of subsistence are not proportioned to each other by the exercise of enlightened prudence, poverty and misery must always exist. The illustration of the doctrine is simply this: that a piece of

land which will exactly support a family of four or five persons will not support the spreading families of those four or five persons ; and the moral inference from this is, that forethought ought to be exercised about the future subsistence of such families, or their numbers will be reduced by hunger or disease. Any illustrations or amplifications of these simple facts which may be found in Mr. Malthus's works, and which may be misunderstood or disliked, cannot impair the great service he rendered in pointing out the fact which lies at the bottom of social destitution ; nor can any discoveries or recognition of means of increasing food by improving the productiveness of land at home, or drawing from a larger area abroad, touch his theory more or less. Whatever blessings, whatever intermissions of anxiety, we may obtain by such methods, the fact remains that human families expand in numbers while cornfields do not expand in size, nor, by any means discovered or conceivable, in a productiveness which can keep pace with human increase. Mr. Malthus's simple humanity was shown in the readiness and plainness with which he made known this essential truth. The hardness and cruelty would have been in concealing it after it once became apparent to his mind. As for the foolish and disagreeable notions which are too commonly associated with his name and theory, — such as that he desired that poor people should not marry, — they may be regarded as mere unfounded imputations, cast upon his works by careless rumor ; in spreading which, however, those are not guiltless who have the opportunity of seeing for themselves what Malthus did think and say. His works will probably be little read henceforth ; for the first and chief, his " *Essay on Population*," has answered its purpose. All who turn their thoughts towards political economy at all, are aware that a determinate stock of food, which is just sufficient for a certain number, must be insufficient for any greater number ; and that, while we have among us so much destitution as we see, it must be a consideration of the first moment so to educate the rising generation, and so to arrange the inducements of their life, as to train them to prudence for their own comfort, and humanity towards their children. The service which Mr. Malthus did to society was in fixing its attention upon the laws of increase of eaters and of food, and on the morality — a cheerful and genial morality, opposed only to license — which is indicated by those natural laws. Mr. Malthus was a clergyman, and professor of history and political economy at the East India College at Haileybury. His life was useful and innocent, serene and cheerful, — supported and graced by universal respect and love among those who knew him. He reached his sixty-ninth year.

An old antagonist of his, — a man who was in a state of an-

tagonism to much that is in the world, — William Godwin, died in April, 1836. Godwin was a man of great powers, ^{William Godwin.} insufficiently balanced; and, as the European world was, in his youth, a mighty conflict of great powers insufficiently balanced, he was just the man to make an impression of vast force on the society of his day. Soon after his "Political Justice" was published, working-men were seen to club their earnings to buy it, and to meet under a tree or in an ale-house to read it. It wrought so violently that Godwin saw there must be unsoundness in it; and he modified it considerably before he re-issued it. His mind was acute, and, through the generosity of his heart, profound; but it was one-sided. With us, society and government had been one-sided in the opposite direction; and it was a benefit to us all, that, when driven from the purely conventional view of things, society fell in with a Godwin who presented, in the broadest manner, the natural. He suffered, individually, from the antagonism, and so did many of his disciples; but it was the safest thing for society at large, in that crisis, to have the whole material of social philosophy, the whole choice of social organization, exhibited before it at once. There can be no doubt that government and society in England at this day are the better for the astuteness and the audacity, the truth and the error, the depth and the shallows, the generosity and the injustice of Godwin, as manifested in his "Political Justice;" and thus he was one — though perhaps the most unpalatable — of the benefactors of his age. Many who do not regard him from this point of view are grateful for his wonderful novels, — "Caleb Williams" and "St. Leon." These are but a small portion of his works; but they are those by which he is best known. He controverted Malthus; he wrote a "History of the Commonwealth," and a series of historical books for children; and, in short, was busy with his pen through the greater part of a long life. He was the husband of Mary Wollstonecraft, whom he lost a few months after their marriage. In his old age, a small sinecure office was given him by the Grey Ministry, with rooms in connection with the House of Commons; and there he loved to show the old Star-chamber, which was so soon to be destroyed before his face; and to exhibit the tallies, the burning of which was to occasion the destruction. On the night of the fire, he was at the theatre; and, when it became clear that his chambers were in danger, his strong-minded old wife would not have him alarmed by a message, but managed to remove his property before he returned to be amazed at the sight. He was saved the worst part of the shock, and lived for nearly a year and a half afterwards, when he quietly sank out of the life he loved so well, in the eighty-first year of his age.

The interests of the period now closing were so various, so

widely spread, and, through the weakness of the government, so desultory, that it has been a task of no slight difficulty to bring them together, and present them in any effectual sequence and natural connection. We have now before us the closing period of this history, in which the events seem to draw together in their very magnitude, and to prescribe their own order, which will be interrupted only by some necessary retrospect here and there.

BOOK VI.



CHAPTER I.

THE general election of 1841 was one of extraordinary importance. It was not that any one great question was now, as in 1831, to be settled by a House of Commons, General election. which should be, in fact, an assemblage of delegates; but that something yet more important should be done. The ministers hoped, and apparently believed, that the country would support them on the free-trade question, as it had done on the parliamentary reform question; and they calculated on beginning a new career in virtue of their proposal of a fixed duty on corn. But in this they were three times mistaken. The people were not yet ready for such a struggle on this question as they had gone through ten years before for a greater. If they had been ready, the free-traders could not have carried their point under those oppressive provisions of the Reform Bill which secured the preponderance of the landed interest in the representation; and, again, they had not that confidence in the government which could stimulate them to any effectual effort on behalf of the government proposition. Nothing had happened for some years to give them any confidence in the Whig Administration; and much had happened every year to prevent their trusting Lord Melbourne and his colleagues with the subject of the corn-laws. The ministers who carried the Reform Bill had advocated parliamentary reform for a long course of years, — had seen the truth, and spoken for it, and were fit to act in its behalf when the season came; but the men who now assumed to be reformers on the corn question had, both in and out of office, steadily resisted this very reform, while in possession of precisely the same means of information which they had at present. The Premier had pronounced the proposal of corn-law reform mad; and Lord J. Russell had called it mischievous, absurd, impracticable, and unnecessary. He had resisted such proposals ever since he came into office, — at first contemptuously, and then vehemently; and when he at last, and somewhat suddenly, declared himself in

favor of a moderate fixed duty, he had no right to expect the support of the nation. The ministers had no right even to resent popular doubts of their sincerity; but there were thousands who declined entering upon the inquiry as to the sincerity of ministers, who yet positively denied their trustworthiness. The question was too important to be committed to the management of men who had, for nine out of ten years of office, acted strongly on the wrong side; and who had, for several sessions past, shown that they could not conduct any important business whatever. The corn-law question was not, therefore, that on which the elections proceeded, on the whole, though the Conservatives and the immediate adherents of the Whig government agreed in putting it forward as the ground of their conflict. The government candidates shouted forth Lord J. Russell's fixed duty as their election-cry; but they met with little response from the people. The people at large felt that a more important consideration than even corn-law reform was pressing.

The more sagacious and better educated among them put their conviction into words; but many thousands felt and acted upon the conviction who could not put it into words. They felt that the very heart of our political virtue and honor was eaten out by the incompetence, moral and official, of the Whig Administration. During their protracted decline in power, in reputation, and in character, they had dragged down with them the aspiration, the earnestness, and the hope of the people; and the political deterioration must be endured no longer. Not only had parliamentary reform become almost a cant term under their ineffectual and unprincipled rule; but the very virtue which had achieved that reform was starved out by the same sponsors who had offered themselves before the congregation of the world to cherish it. The indifferent had, under Whig rule, become more indifferent; the sceptical, more doubting; the timid, more disheartened; the earnest, more angry from year to year, till they were now exasperated into an opposition as fierce as could be offered by the most antiquated or selfish of the landed interest. It would be no small gain, in displacing the Whigs, to be relieved about the transaction of the daily business of the nation,—to know that the government was in the hands of men who could prepare Acts of Parliament, and obtain accurate information, and procure good servants to do their work without blunders and delay. It would be a yet greater gain to obtain relief of mind about our financial affairs,—to feel that the money-matters of the State were in able hands, and that the immoral and destructive process was stopped, of sinking deeper into debt every year, finding the annual deficit in no degree repaired, but only met by loans, and covered over with explanations and smiles and promises. Greater still would

be the gain of having any set of men in power who would cause political action in the people. There was no apprehension that the old Tory rule would ever be revived. From the day when the Duke of Wellington and Sir R. Peel had stood forth as reformers in any department of principle, all possibility of rank Tory rule was over. The question now was only of degrees and modes of reform; and if men of any party were once in place who had any power to govern, and any political honor to guard, the people might and must co-operate with them, either in the way of support or opposition; and that political life would revive within the heart of the nation which had well-nigh died out under the chill of hopelessness on the one part, and the poison of contempt on the other. The extraordinary importance of the elections of 1841 lay, not in any pretence of settling the corn question, but in the opportunity afforded of dislodging the tenacious tenants of the public offices. Notices to quit had been in vain; and twice had the day of reckoning been got over by an exercise of royal favor. Now the time was come for taking off the roof, if the people so pleased. They did so please; and very thoroughly they did the work.

Throughout the elections, the support of the government was made a confidence question. Fatal as was this method of appeal, the Whig government had no other. And it was on the ground of promises only that they could ask for confidence. The appeal, on the ground of their services in carrying parliamentary reform, had been so long worn out that the elections of 1837 had been carried by the free use of the Queen's name; and nothing had happened since to justify an appeal to any thing in the past. They now asked for confidence on the ground of what they intended to do; but this is an appeal ill becoming any Ministry at the end of ten years, almost uninterrupted, of power; and it was wholly inadmissible from an Administration which had once assumed the title of reforming, but had long since fallen back under its old title of Whig. The people refused the great confidence vote on their wide floor within the four seas; and prepared for the refusal of the smaller confidence vote which was to be asked for within the four walls of their House of Parliament.

Lord J. Russell stood for the city of London, and was returned by a majority of only seven over the fifth candidate, who was a Conservative. Two Conservatives and one Liberal were above him on the poll. Some mirth was excited by the zeal of certain of the government party who commemorated this victory, as they called it, — though two Conservatives were let in, — by a medal, showing on its reverse side a wreath of wheat-ears, and the motto "Free-trade," with the additional words, "Per mare per

terram;" which were translated, "One foot on sea, and another on shore" ("to one thing constant never").¹ The few victories of this kind gained by the ministers were as fatal as their defeats; for they could not afford to have their great towns neutralized while the counties were returning Conservatives in overwhelming numbers. Lord Howick was rejected in Northumberland, and Lords Morpeth and Milton by the West Riding of Yorkshire. While free-trade professions were vague and faint, declarations of want of confidence were loud and clear in some of the largest towns. Complaints — no doubt just — were made, on every hand, of corruption; and it was believed that such an amount of bribery had seldom, if ever before, been known: but no one could say that the one party was more guilty than the other. It was alleged, and truly, that the Conservatives had been more attentive to the registration than the Reformers; and this was one of the most mortifying tokens of the popular indifference to the Whig government. The result was, a Whig majority of 9 in Scotland, and 19 in Ireland; and a Conservative majority of 104 in England and Wales.² In the elections of 1837, the government majority had fallen to 16, according to some authorities; 12, according to others. Now the government was in a minority of 76; and this great Conservative majority was sure to be largely increased as soon as power should pass from the Whigs to the opposition, — there being always in Parliament a considerable body of men disposed to support the government, whatever it may be.

The end was known to be near. The Queen and her household had learned their part in the ensuing changes by painful experience. The ladies prepared to resign their offices in good time, and the Queen prepared herself to accept their resignation without objection. The new Parliament assembled New Parliament. on the 19th of August; Lord J. Russell and Sir R. Peel meeting at the bar, and shaking hands "very cordially."³ Mr. Lefevre was rechosen speaker with the smoothest unanimity; and then everybody waited for the royal speech. Next, there was much comment on the speech being delivered by commission, while the Queen was in good health, the weather fine, and Her Majesty known to be usually disposed to enjoy these public occasions. It was alleged that the Queen's physician had advised Her Majesty to stay at home; and this again fixed expectation on the speech. It was natural that the Sovereign should feel some emotion on meeting a Parliament elected for the very purpose of overthrowing an Administration to which she was attached by all the associations of her accession to the throne,

¹ Spectator, 1841, p. 686.

² Hansard, lix. p. 8.

³ Annual Register, 1841, p. 147.

and by ties of confidence and custom; but further reasons for her absence appeared when the speech was read. It was singularly controversial in its tone, and was therefore far from being the kind of address which it suited the dignity of a Sovereign, or her relations with her Parliament, to deliver by word of mouth. Not only were the lords and gentlemen in Parliament requested to consider the corn-laws, but they were to determine whether those laws did not produce this and that and the other bad consequence.¹ It is inconceivable that the ministers should not have foreseen the embarrassment in which they would have placed their royal mistress, if Parliament should "determine" that the corn-laws did not produce these bad consequences; a determination far more probable than an agreement of the majority of this particular Parliament with the opinion of the Queen. This singularity in the speech pointed to the necessity of a dissolution of this Parliament, unless the existing Ministry should be displaced before any debate on the corn-laws came on; and it rendered indispensable a protest on the part of certain members against the unconstitutional aspect given to the speech by the Sovereign being brought forward to make the first move in a great controversy. A few nights afterwards, Lord J. Russell was so appealed to by Lord Stanley as to be forced to an earnest declaration that the speech expressed the sentiments of the ministers, and that they alone were responsible for any thing that it contained.²

The address was moved in the Upper House by Lord Spencer, and seconded by Lord Clanricarde; and both speakers openly and at length condemned the existing corn-laws. It was impossible to enter into controversy on this point in preparing an answer to the speech in which the Sovereign's opinion appeared to be declared; and the amendment moved by Lord Ripon therefore took another ground. It expressed the alarm of Parliament at the continued excess of expenditure over income,—promised careful consideration of the interests commended to them,—but declared that nothing could be done while the government did not possess the confidence of the House or of the country, and that Her Majesty's present ministers did not possess that confidence. This amendment was carried by a majority of 72 on the night of the 24th of August.³ A similar amendment to the address in the Commons was proposed by Mr. Stuart Wortley, who had succeeded Lord Morpeth in the representation of the West Riding of Yorkshire; and it was carried by a majority of 91. The last acts of the Whig government deepened their unpopularity with their best remaining supporters,—those who had yet hoped to carry some

¹ Hansard, lix. p. 16. ² Hansard, lix. p. 483. ³ Hansard, lix. p. 106.

goodly measure of free-trade by their means.¹ These were displeased that the corn-law question should have been so mixed up with the personal interests of the ministers as to share in their personal discredit. They, however, voted in favor of the ministerial address, for the sake of the free-trade principle. Yet was the majority against ministers in both Houses as overwhelming as has been seen. It only remained for the Sovereign to communicate her reply, and for the ministers to resign. The reply was dignified. The Queen expressed her satisfaction at the spirit in which Parliament proposed to deliberate on the matters she had recommended to them; and declared, in conclusion, "Ever anxious to listen to the advice of my Parliament, I will take immediate measures for the formation of a new Administration."² This message reached the Commons on Monday, August 30; and on Thursday, September 2, the Queen spent her last evening with the household whom she had declared to be so dear to her. Scarcely a word was spoken at the dinner-table; and, when she was with her ladies afterwards, tears and regrets broke forth with little restraint. They were natural and amiable. It was no fault of hers — nor of theirs — that their connection was made dependent on the state of political parties. The blame rested elsewhere, though the suffering was with them. Everybody pitied the young sovereign, and saw and felt the hardship; but there were many who looked forward cheerfully to an approaching time when she would know a new satisfaction in reposing upon an Administration really strong, efficient, and supported by the country, and on a household composed of persons among whom she could make friends without the fear of their removal from any other cause than her wish, or their own.

Queen's
household
changed.

On the night of Monday, August 30, Lord Melbourne in the one House, and Lord J. Russell in the other, declared, that, in consequence of the votes of both Houses on the address, the ministers had resigned their offices, and now continued in their places only till their successors should be appointed.³

Thus was the Melbourne Administration out at last. Men had waited long, if not patiently, for this issue; and the general satisfaction was evident enough. Perhaps it was worth waiting so long to see the exhaustion so complete. It afforded every needful advantage to the incoming Administration; and it yielded a striking lesson to all governments and their constituents. No government had a fairer chance than that of the Whigs from popular and royal favor, — no government had a clearer task to perform, or more aids and supports and stimulus in the perform-

¹ Hansard, lix. p. 449. ² Hansard, lix. p. 476. ³ Hansard, lix. pp. 473, 476.

ance; and, when it became apparent where the want of strength and clearness lay, — that their principles were weak, their views obscure, their purposes fluctuating, their knowledge deficient, and their political honor relaxed, — no Ministry of such popular promise ever sank so low. It was well for the political morality of the country that the case was so clear, — made so clear, at last, by the suicidal appeal to the country in the elections. This clear exposition of the case might afford some reparation — the only reparation possible — for the mischief of a long retention of office by men who could not, with all means of power in their hands, govern the country. The people, who had for years been divided between apathy and fretfulness under a tenacious but helpless Administration, might now hope to enjoy the repose of confidence in the midst of activity in obtaining reforms. They would now have able men, in a united cabinet, to deal with; and it would depend much on themselves what the direction should be that the ability of the Ministry should take. If the Peel Cabinet should prove a reforming one, that would be the best thing that could happen. If it should prove still too conservative, there was now a fair field of opposition open, in which the political life of the country could exercise itself, and ascertain how much energy it could still command.

CHAPTER II.

THE distribution of office was watched with great eagerness by the whole country. The first great hope was, that Sir Robert Peel would unite the offices of first Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. The most pressing evil was the state of our finances. The people were becoming fretted and alarmed at the annual deficit, for the cure of which no vigorous measures were taken; and the distress had now, for a long time, been such as to pull down the national courage, and press the working-classes into depths of hopelessness. If any power could redeem us from this distress and debt, it was Peel; for we had no other such financier. There was some regret, therefore, when it was known that Mr. Goulburn was made Chancellor of the Exchequer; but still it was considered certain that Peel's mind would preside in that department, and that all its action would proceed upon his views.

The next most interesting point was, who was to be Foreign Secretary, and who at the Board of Control. Next to retrieving our affairs at home, was the consideration of keeping the peace in Europe and America, and returning to a state of peace in Asia. Our accord with the United States was in peril from boundary questions, which we shall have to review, and from the right-of-search question, which threatened also to embroil us with Powers nearer home. Our "good understanding" with France was far from being what it was; and the right of search, and some Spanish difficulties, made our peace with the French very precarious; while the sagacious saw that the great continental struggle, so sure to happen, might henceforth begin on any occasion of provocation, however slight. And we were now, as will presently be seen, actually at war with China, and suffering under an accumulation of disasters in India. After twenty-six years of peace, we were apparently in imminent danger of war, at a time when every thing was going wrong at home; when agriculture was moaning with hunger, and manufactures seemed dying, and commerce was well-nigh bankrupt; when Ireland was stirring in rebellion, and the working-classes in England and Scotland were growing des-

New Admin-
istration.

Lord Aber-
deen.

perate, and debt was stealing upon us, and the nerves of the stoutest were beginning to be shaken, from the young sovereign in her palace to the field-laborer in his damp hovel, and the gaunt weaver chafing beside his empty loom. It was no time for war; and great was the importance of appointing men in connection with foreign affairs, and with the India House, who should be trustworthy for prudence and a quiet demeanor, and averse from meddling and noise, showing their sense of their country's dignity and honor by taking them for granted, and relying upon them. Lord Ellenborough was at the Board of Control; and people thought this a very doubtful appointment. It did not mend the matter that he soon went out to India as Governor-general. It was impossible to suppose him the right man for such offices at such a time. The appointment of Lord Aberdeen as Foreign Secretary was more fortunate. It was soon evident that the honor of England and her peace with the world were safe in his hands. "It seems strange," observed an eminent American statesman to an English traveller, "that we republicans should be glad when your Tories come into power. One would think that our sympathies should be with your reform governments. But the truth is, we cannot get on with your Whig ministers. They do not understand business, and they do not understand official good-manners. Your Tory ministers are able and attentive and courteous; and, when we do not agree, we are not likely to quarrel. But with the Whigs we have to forbear, and nothing goes smoothly." This feeling being shared by other governments, the chances of peace were much improved by the retirement of an unpopular foreign minister, and the appearance in his stead of one of such weight of character, and quiet dignity of temper, as Lord Aberdeen. Another thoroughly satisfactory appointment was that of Sir James Graham as Home Secretary. His quality had been proved by the good work he had done at the Admiralty. Lord Ripon was not thought strong enough for his post at the Board of Trade. Lord Stanley was unhappily made Colonial Minister, — an office for which superhuman powers and angelic attributes of temper are requisite; and in which his superficial cleverness, and his insolent and irritable temper, might work more mischief in five years than a century could cure. Another objectionable appointment was that of the Duke of Buckingham to be Lord Privy Seal; but the displeasure at this was soon put an end to by the Duke's retirement from office, on his discovery that he was a member of a reforming Administration. Another, who had no business in such a Ministry, was Sir Edward Knatchbull; but he was only paymaster of the forces, and naval treasurer, and not a man of any ability; so

that his power for mischief was small. Lord Lyndhurst was, of course, Lord Chancellor. Lord Wharncliffe, President of the Council, perhaps proved as agreeable a surprise to the nation as any one of his colleagues. Amidst some old Tory tendencies to regard office too much as a personal and family privilege, and too little as a trust, he manifested, throughout his term of occupancy, such an earnest desire for the promotion of popular education, such liberality of views, such sagacity and diligence in business, as made him one of the most valued members of the government.

Out of the Cabinet, the most notable man was, perhaps, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, who was Vice-president of the Board of Trade, and Master of the Mint. The character of his mind was not very clearly understood; and the prevalent doubt was whether he understood it himself: but enough was known of his seriousness, his thoughtfulness, and his conscientiousness, to cause him to be regarded with emphatic respect and hope, at a time when earnest men were to be prized above all others. Some other young men came into minor offices, from whom much was expected by the few who already knew them,—as Lord Lincoln, heir of the Duke of Newcastle, and the Hon. Sidney Herbert; Lord Lincoln going to the Woods and Forests Department, and Mr. Sidney Herbert being Secretary to the Admiralty. Lord Lowther was Postmaster-general; Lord G. Somerset, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; and Sir George Murray, Master-general of the Ordnance.

The day after the mournful dining of the Court, when the Queen and her household were about to part,—to undergo a separation far more complete than would have been necessary if they had not been at once near relations of the late ministers and Her Majesty's domestic companions,—the Queen had to go through much painful business. On that Friday morning, September 3, crowds thronged the approaches of Claremont, where the court was staying. It was not like an ordinary change of Ministry. The exhaustion of the Whigs was so complete, that men knew that a former period of national history was closing, and another coming in; and the crowd was on the watch, that gray autumnal morning, not only for the old ministers and the new, but for every incident which might be construed as an omen.¹ The old ministers drove up first, in plain clothes, were admitted to the royal presence, and delivered up the seals of office. Meantime, the new ministers arrived, in court-dresses; and "the first sunburst" occurred as Sir R. Peel drove in at the gates. He was warmly cheered, as was the Duke of Wellington; and both looked very well pleased, the people said.

¹ Times newspaper, September 3, 1841.

When the ex-ministers departed, Sir R. Peel had audience of the Queen, to kiss hands on his appointment; and, after him, the Duke of Wellington and three or four more. Then the Queen and Prince Albert repaired to the corridor, and held a privy-council; the Queen declaring Lord Wharncliffe its president. The swearing-in of new members was got over quickly, — the whole business, with luncheon, occupying only half-an-hour. By half-past two, the anxious young sovereign was left to make domestic acquaintance with her new household, and to miss the familiar friends under whose guidance she had been accustomed to do her share of State business. She was probably little aware how soon she could repose entire confidence in her first Minister, and feel a new kind of ease about the conduct of public affairs.

The next amusement for observers was seeing the eminent men of the country change places, on the re-assembling of Parliament on the 16th of September. The new First nights in Parliament. ministers had lost no seats in the process of their re-election; and they therefore assembled their whole number. Some of the Liberals went over, and occupied the front benches of opposition; some seemed at a loss where to place themselves, after having sat in the same seats for ten years, with only a short interval. One or two members, too Radical to belong to any party, would not move, but sat composedly among the Tories. The next interest for those who saw how serious was our condition, was in hearing the Minister's statement as to how government meant to proceed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must ask a vote of 2,500,000*l.*; and he would then state how he proposed temporarily to meet the existing deficiency.¹ At the beginning of the next session, ministers would declare by what large measures they proposed to rectify the finances of the country, and equalize the revenue and the expenditure; an object of the very first importance in their eyes. Lord J. Russell made captious and taunting speeches, finding fault with this delay, and calling for an exposition of the government policy in regard to the corn-trade within a month;² and this provoked a retort from the Minister, in the form of a question why the late government had deferred, for five years of power, a question which they would not now allow a new Ministry five months to consider and mature; and thus it was immediately evident that there was to be parliamentary strife between the late and present leaders in the Commons.³ It was harrowing to the feelings of men of all parties to hear the statements made of the intense suffering of the operative classes from hunger, and the frequent declarations of their representatives that many of them could not live to learn

¹ Hansard, lix. pp. 511, 516.

² Hansard, lix. pp. 517, 529.

³ Hansard, lix. p. 542.

what measures government would propose for their relief; and to the Minister it must have been wearing to be appealed to, night after night, to declare what he proposed to do for the relief of the starving, and reproached in advance as purposing to keep up the price of food, and to sacrifice the lives of the poor to the purses of the aristocracy. These things seem foolish now,—hasty, pettish, and unreasonable; but we must remember that Sir R. Peel and his Cabinet were, as yet, believers in the sliding-scale; that, while exposing the bad qualities of Lord J. Russell's 8s. fixed duty, they had not yet given the slightest intimation that they had any thing better to propose; and that their opponents were truly heart-stricken at the spectacle of the misery of the manufacturing districts; while, from long habit, they regarded the Peel Administration as purely aristocratic in its temper and principles. The Premier's replies were uniformly calm and quiet. He would not be forced to any disclosures before his colleagues and he were prepared with their plans. No one could grieve more deeply and sincerely for the distress of the people; but the deeper that distress, the more careful should government be to avoid rashness in legislation and in promise. He would not countenance the delusion that it was possible to relieve the popular distress immediately by any parliamentary measure whatever. The only thing that legislation could do was to remove obstruction, to lay the foundation of improvement, and work a gradual amelioration in the condition of society. Those who heard him, and those who read his speeches, under the prejudice of his former Toryism, told the people, that, having the powers of government in his hand, he now refused to do the first duty of the government,—to employ and feed the people. This is worth noting in evidence of the retribution which Sir R. Peel had to undergo for his ancient opinions or party connections, and of the ignorance in regard to the functions of a representative government which existed, nine years after the passage of the Reform Bill, among a considerable number of the men who had caused that Bill to pass.

The Minister's difficulties were increased by an unfortunate declaration of the Duke of Wellington's in the House of Lords,—that there was no deficiency of corn in the country; that the distress had nothing to do with the food-question; that it was owing to want of work and of wages, and other causes; but that he never heard how Parliament could do any thing in such a case.¹ Probably no one expected the Duke of Wellington ever to come out as a political economist, or supposed that at his years he could be taken in hand as a pupil by Sir R. Peel; but it reflected some discredit on the government, and confirmed certain despairing

¹ Hansard, lix. p. 1110.

statements of opposition members, when so eminent a member of the new government could see no connection between food and work,—food and wages; and no evidence that the food-question was concerned in the existing intolerable distress.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer early proposed to provide for the 2,500,000*l.* (nearly) which was required for the public service, by selling stock for the emergency,—declaring his dislike of increasing the debt, and his intention of proposing, in the next session, comprehensive and permanent methods of provision for the public service.¹ There was much natural repining at any increase of the debt, and much denunciation of the method, as if the need had been the work of the new government; but the thing was agreed to, because, in fact, nobody saw any thing else that could be done. The poor-law commissioners' powers were renewed for six months, that the relief of pauperism might not stop till the subject of the poor-law could be reviewed in Parliament. The opposition to this brief and indispensable renewal showed how serious a matter the review of the law would be, and indicated that the question of pauperism would be one of the most pressing "difficulties" of this, as of every Administration. These and some other matters being temporarily arranged, Parliament was prorogued by commission on the 7th of

October. The speech did not, this time, express any Prorogation. opinions on the corn-laws, but declared that the attention of Parliament would have to be given, as soon as possible, to the means of equalizing the national income and expenditure, and of providing against the recurrence of the terrible distress which had for long prevailed in the manufacturing districts,—a distress for which Her Majesty expressed the deepest concern.²

The prorogation was to the 11th of November. Meantime, the speech was a riddle for the politicians and the sufferers of the country to ponder; and the ministers had enough to do in considering and settling their plans for the retrieval of our affairs in the far East, and about our own doors. The news which arrived from the one and the other region was enough to try the courage of a Wellington, and exhaust the resources of a Peel.

¹ Hansard, lix. p. 835.

² Hansard, lix. p. 1154.

CHAPTER III.

FOR more than a century past,—ever since our relations with India became a matter of popular interest,—it has been a subject of speculation or observation why there was so little war in the heart of Asia, among those steppes which, according to all analogy, would be supposed likely to be the scene of constant or ever-renewed warfare. While, in the centre of every other great continent, there are interminable feuds, apparently necessitated by geographical conditions, the interior of Asia, where the same geographical conditions exist, has, for above a century, been as quiet as if it had been a maritime territory. The great table-lands are there, rising shelf above shelf, till it dizzies the imagination to mount the vast stair, from the steaming plains of the Ganges and the Camboja up from height to height of the Himalayas and the Snowy Mountains, finding at the top but little descent on the other side; but, again, range above range of table-land, still rising till that deep interior is reached which no stranger may penetrate, except some wandering Russian trader, or adventurous pilgrim, who, once in a century or two, may get in, if he cannot get across. The ordinary and necessary population of such lands is there,—the Tibetan and Mongolian; apparently so apt, and once so ready, for war; yet, as we know from the facts of surrounding countries, no warfare has been carried on in those wild regions for above a century.

The reason is, that a policy of peace has been the deliberate choice of the empire of China. There is no chance in the matter: if there were, the chances for war would be overwhelming. It is an affair of deliberate choice and fixed principle, in regard to which the whole arrangements of the empire have been made. There is no regular army in China,—not because the Chinese are ignorant of armies and war-policy, but because they dread a military sovereignty, and military contests for the throne. The statesmen of China are ready to explain, when they can find foreigners able to understand their language, and willing to know their minds, that they abjure conquest for the same reasons which make them avoid danger of a military despotism; because they desire a settled and industrial mode of life for their people, and

to restrain the tribes of the interior by an immutable course of policy, rather than by force of arms. This method is partly suggested, and altogether favored, by the natural defences of the country. If war can be prevented from springing up in the great interior plains, their bounding mountains may keep the empire pretty safe from foreign invasion. All along the vast Siberian frontier, and that of Independent Tartary, and along the northern spurs of the Himalayas, there is a militia, — Manchoo, Mongolian, and Tibetan, — whose rough organization is of a feudal character, and which serves as a sufficient defence of the empire without any trained army. As for the seaboard, — till lately, the Chinese had no foe to contend with but pirates; and their rude vessels are able to cope with that enemy.¹ When the possibility of assaults from Europe and America presented itself to them, they declare that they weighed the comparative merits of two plans; and here again deliberately made their choice, — to abide by their peace-policy. If they set to work to raise a navy, they must be taught, aided, and officered by foreigners; and, from that moment, both their objects — civil sovereignty and unbroken peace — would be in peril: the other plan was therefore chosen; and, on demand, commercial advantages were granted to Europeans and Americans, as far as this could be done without breach of the exclusive policy of the empire, and only as a less evil than war. In both its aims, the Chinese empire succeeded for a longer period than it is usual to see empires pursue definite aims. There have been no conflicts between the throne and the army, or between the throne and the people, or by the throne and army together against the people, such as have, through all time, ravaged empires in certain stages of civilization. The few divisions of trained soldiery which guard the capital are scattered, as garrisons, among the large towns, — are not an army, and could hardly form even the nucleus of one; and, where there is no army, there can be no real political relations with any foreign country. The Americans have long understood all this, and have acted upon their knowledge, — seeking no political relations with China before the British compelled them to do so, but carrying on a most lucrative trade, and maintaining the most friendly private relations with the Chinese, by means of merchant-vessels, without a hint of naval armaments, and through the agency of supercargoes, without any mention of ambassadors.

The principle of Chinese policy may be judged by nations or individuals, — it may be admired, excused, criticized, wondered at, pitied, or laughed at; but it *is* a principle, — entitled to the respect due to principles wherever they are found. It may be that the immutable policy of China itself must be proved, like

¹ Pekin Gazette. In the Times, July 26, 1849.

all work of men's brains and hands, subject to mutation under the operation of time. It may be, that, to Europeans and Americans, such a policy may appear not only blind and weak, but morally indefensible; but not the less is it a very serious thing to explode a system so ancient, so full of purpose, and so energetically preserved. If the exploding process is begun in ignorance and self-interest, and carried on in ignorance and a spirit of scorn, it is a more than serious,—it is a sad and solemn matter. This process took place under the successive Whig Administrations, from the formation of the Cabinet of Lord Grey to the dissolution of that of Lord Melbourne; but it was not the Whig ministers alone who were responsible in the matter. The melancholy ignorance and scorn which led us into what will ever be called the opium war were shared by the opposition, and by the great body of the nation. What faults of management there were, must be imputed to the ministers of the day, and their supporters in this affair among the opposition: but, if hereafter the opium war with China appears in the eyes of the historian and the moralist a disgrace, it will be as a national disgrace; for the people put no effectual check upon the government, but rather stimulated its action, by sharing its ignorance and vying with its spirit of scorn. There was scarcely a school-boy on the American seaboard who could not have justly rebuked our city electors, our newspaper editors, and our statesmen of every party, about our opium war.

It is probable that this war would never have taken place if our knowledge of the Chinese had been sufficient to allay our spirit of scorn. The popular English notion of the Chinese seems to have been held by the government, and the agents they sent out, who might have learned better by seeking information from merchants resident many years in the country. The general notion of China was and is, of a country dreadfully over-peopled, so that multitudes are compelled to live in boats, floating about to pick up dead dogs for food; that they are tyrannized over by a Tartar government, which they would fain be rid of, and by an aristocracy which will permit no middle class; that they call foreigners "barbarians," and designate Europeans by foul epithets instead of their proper names; and that their sole endeavor in regard to foreigners is to insult and mock them. Merchants of any nation who have lived long enough in the neighborhood of the Chinese to be qualified to speak of them, give a very different account from this. They declare that the government is, on the whole, favorable to the industry and comfort of the people; that the people are easy and contented; that the rights of property are respected; and that there is a large and wealthy

English ignorance of China.

State of China.

middle class; that literature is the highest pursuit; that the Chinese possess a greater body of literature than Europe can show; and that nothing is known among us of its quality, as it remains wholly unexplored; that the notion of insulting epithets being applied to our agents in lieu of their own names is an utter delusion, arising from ignorance of the fact that the Chinese, having no alphabet, are obliged to express new names by the words in their language which approach nearest in sound.¹ Thus, when Lord Napier fired up at being written down "laboriously vile," Mr. Morrison was written down "a polite horse;" and another resident at Macao, "a cwt. of hemp." Such misconceptions of Chinese character and condition, together with our bigoted persistence in conducting intercourse with a singular state according to our own customary methods and forms, and not theirs, were a bad preparation for the management of difficulties, if such should arise; and the event was painful and discreditable accordingly.

One of the great branches of the trade of the East India Company was in opium with China; and, when the company's charter expired in 1834, the trade was ^{The opium question.} vigorously pushed by private merchants, who purchased the article from the company. The Chinese government had long desired and endeavored to stop the opium-trade, as purely mischievous to the people. Whether the motives of the government were philanthropic or politic,—whether it mourned over the popular intemperance in opium-smoking, or feared the effects of a constant and increasing drain of its silver currency, does not affect the question; nor is it of any consequence to us, in regard to the controversy, whether the political economy of the Chinese government, in interfering with trade, was good or bad. The facts were, that all traffic in opium was expressly forbidden; that British merchants, nevertheless, carried on a profitable commerce in opium,—not only smuggling it in as our smugglers bring in brandy and gin, but making a lodgment in the country for the article and its sale under the shelter of the arrangements for a general trade at Macao and Canton; that the government was, for a course of years, supine in trusting the enforcements of its prohibition to its provincial authorities; that it roused itself gradually, repeating the prohibition with warnings more and more emphatic; that the prohibition and warnings were wholly neglected, and it became necessary to make the matter,—or let it be made,—a cause of war. As the "Colonial Gazette"² pointed out, it is as if—the growth of tobacco being prohibited in the British Islands—the merchants of France should steal into our county of Kent, establish tobacco-growing,

¹ Westminster Review, 1844, p. 282.

² December 18, 1839.

sell the produce freely among our people, and fix an agent at Dover to superintend the affair. In such a case we should hardly offer so many warnings as the Chinese government did, before putting the agent into confinement, while the tobacco plants were destroyed.

This opium-trade proceeded under the eyes of the superintendents appointed by the British government to manage our commercial affairs in China, after the throwing open of the trade in 1834. The appointment of these superintendents as political agents was a melancholy mistake, which could not have been committed by any government aware of the inability or indisposition of the Chinese to enter into any political relations whatever. Lord Napier was the first chief-superintendent sent out; and some glimpse of the truth as to what our intercourse with China ought to be, appears in Lord Palmerston's instructions to Lord Napier, not to pass the Boca Tigris, at the entrance of the Canton River, in a ship-of-war, as "the Chinese authorities have invariably made a marked distinction between ships-of-war and merchantmen, in regard to the privilege of intercourse."¹ Lord Napier, however, took his own way against this and every other warning. Up to the time of his arrival at Macao, on the 15th of July, 1834, the Chinese had heard nothing of any appointment of superintendents; and great was their perturbation at the pomp and bustle in which they found themselves implicated. Mr. (now Sir John) Davis, was the second superintendent; and Sir George Robinson, who understood the case better, and acted more sensibly than anybody else, was the third. Lord Napier was expressly directed to announce his arrival at Canton by a letter to the viceroy. He did so; and he went up the river in an armed vessel. From this first moment, all went wrong. The letter was declined, because, by the customs of the country, the agent's arrival must be notified to the government before any intercourse could be established; and Lord Napier had already broken through all rules in coming up the river in defiance of a direction to wait at Macao for a pass. He was told that the Hong merchants were the party through whom communications like his were to be forwarded, as only memorials and petitions were received through the channel that he had attempted; and two Hong merchants, bearing credentials, waited upon him to hear what he had to say.² Lord Napier, however, dismissed them courteously; insisted on seeing the viceroy, or writing to him; and, at last, in order to get a letter into his hands, wrote upon it the word "pin," or "petition." It does not seem to have occurred to him, that provincial authorities had no power to alter in his favor the established forms of the

¹ Spectator, 1840, p. 273.

² Westminster Review, 1840, p. 282.

government; and he regarded as a personal insult every impediment to the transaction of his business.

It was at this stage that he took offence at the writing of his name,—"laboriously vile," as he was assured it meant. His letter did not succeed. Next, he had an interview with three eminent mandarins of the province; but he hurt their feelings by insisting on their chairs of ceremony being placed according to his ideas, and not according to custom: so they referred him back to the Hong merchants. He refused to see them. He was ordered down the river. Instead of going, he summoned two men-of-war into the river. The alarmed and perplexed authorities declared trade suspended; and Lord Napier replied by a proclamation to the Chinese merchants, in which he complained of the ignorance and obstinacy of the viceroy. It was not possible for the Chinese to bear this; and, as Lord Napier would not depart as desired, he was dislodged by such methods as the inhabitants could command: they placed a guard round his residence, who kept away his native servants, and prevented the carrying in of provisions.¹ Meantime the two frigates were working their way up the river, fired upon from the batteries on shore losing two or three men, but doing more damage than they received, till the anxious authorities, still awaiting instructions from government, offered to let trade proceed if Lord Napier would withdraw to Macao. He had also written to his own government for instructions; but it would be so long before he could receive an answer, his situation was so embarrassing, his nerves were so fretted with anxiety, and his frame so fevered with heat and incessant worry, that he sank under his sufferings. ^{Death of Lord Napier.} Though surrounded by his family, and supplied with excellent medical assistance, he died shortly after his return to Macao. The more mournful this death, the more evident is the justice of the Chinese viceroy's argument in his proclamation: "The Chinese nation has its laws."² It is so everywhere. England has its laws; and how much more so the Celestial Empire! The said foreign minister having crossed a sea of many thousand miles to inquire into, and take the superintendence of, commercial affairs, ought to be a person acquainted with the principles of government, and with the forms essential to its dignity." Acquaintance with the language ought to be added. Not only did Lord Napier bitterly complain of the terms "barbarian" and "barbarian eye" being applied to him, but it was urged upon Lord Palmerston from other quarters to insist on the omission of such terms from all future instruments of negotiation; whereas it turns out that no offence whatever lies in the terms,—the true translation of "barbarian eye" being, "head of the southern peo-

¹ Annual Register, 1840, p. 243.

² Westminster Review, 1840, p. 283.

ple," or "foreigners from the south."¹ The Chinese may need improvement in their geography; but they so far understand courtesy as to use the proverb, "He that spits dirt first defiles his own mouth."

The viceroy, meantime, requested the British to appoint a commercial superintendent, who should control the smuggling of opium. The practice had now become too open and extended to escape the attention of the government at Peking, — nearly forty opium-vessels being then anchored at Lintin. The Chinese official, at the same time, expressed a desire that a commercial chief should be sent out from England, who should not be a king's officer. No notice was taken of these demands, — the hope being that the Chinese would in time be driven by embarrassment to admit the agency of political officials.

After January, 1835, matters went on smoothly for two years, owing to the good sense of Sir George B. Robinson, then chief-superintendent, in consequence of the death of Lord Napier, and Mr. Davis's return to England. Captain Elliot, R.N., who had been secretary to the commission, was now a superintendent. Sir G. B. Robinson sent home agreeable accounts of "a quiet and prosperous routine of trade," owing to his pursuing "a perfectly quiescent line of policy." He wrote these words on the 16th of October, 1835; and we find him declaring, more than thirteen months afterwards on the 28th of November, 1836, that he has received no despatches "conveying his lordship's sentiments or instructions relative to the quiescent course of policy he had deemed it his duty to persevere in;" this quiescent policy not meaning idleness on his own part, as he was all the while performing duties "of a consular nature."² He had not now to wait long for an answer. His salary of 6000*l.* a year was not to be paid for quiescence; and we find him, on the 14th of December, acknowledging the arrival of an intimation that his office was abolished. Yet Lord Palmerston wrote, within five weeks before, to Captain Elliot, that a deputy-superintendent had been appointed "to act as assistant to the chief-superintendent;" and Captain Elliot immediately assumed the title laid down by Sir G. B. Robinson. The inevitable impression on the minds of observers was, that the "quiescent" agent was dismissed to make room for one who would make more noise in the Chinese seas.

In 1838, the opium-smuggling had reached such a pass that the government at Peking evinced an intention of abolishing the traffic at last. Our own government had been repeatedly advised of the growing danger by Captain Elliot, who, in November, 1837, foretold that the authorities would be driven to some violent measures, from the injurious audacity of

Political relation in abeyance.

Opium prohibited.

¹ Westminster Review, 1840, pp. 284, 285.

² Spectator, 1840, p. 274.

Europeans, who actually carried opium up the Canton River in their own boats.¹ He advised that a special commissioner should be sent out to Chusan, or some other Eastern port of China, to settle this bad business in a fresh scene, at a distance from the embarrassments which now attended all negotiations at Canton. The government declined taking any steps of the kind.

Captain Elliot's position was now as difficult as could well be conceived; and, in judging of his conduct of affairs, it should ever be borne in mind that he was left cruelly destitute of guidance from home. Some of the gravest letters he wrote, the most pressing and anxious, were received in Downing Street on the 17th of July; yet Lord Palmerston sent no reply whatever till the 2d of November.² Among the items of information thus treated was one of the last importance, — that a high official had sent a memorial to the Emperor of Peking, advising that the sale of opium should be legalized under a duty of seven dollars per chest. The banishment of this adviser to Tartary was an indication of vigorous resolution to put down the sale of opium, which should have roused our government to immediate activity in stopping the illicit trade, instead of waiting nearly four months without even answering Captain Elliot's letters. The answers at last conveyed no instructions or guidance to the anxious superintendent; and seven months more passed before Lord Palmerston wrote again, — the date of the next despatch from Downing Street being the 15th of June, 1838. At last, some decision had been come to by the government; and it was one very embarrassing to Captain Elliot, from being so long delayed. The government resolved, very properly, to leave the opium-smugglers to meet the consequences of their ventures, in the loss of their property, if the Chinese government chose to decree its forfeiture. If this had been made known at the proper time, neither the merchants nor the superintendent would have had any cause of complaint.

Before the end of the year, a seizure of opium, the property of a British trader, was made at Canton; and the man and the ship that brought his merchandise were ordered out of the river. Yet more, the Hong merchant who secured the ship and cargo was punished with the severe punishment of the wooden collar, though he had nothing whatever to do with the offence. The decision of the question was evidently coming on.³

In January, 1839, proclamation was made in Canton of the approach of the Imperial Commissioner Lin, whose business was to abolish the opium-traffic, and who

Negligence
at home.

Warnings to
smugglers.

Commis-
sioner Lin.

¹ Annual Register, 1840, p. 245.

² Spectator, 1840, p. 274.

³ Annual Register, 1840, p. 245.

came furnished with summary powers for the purpose. Just before the great man appeared, a native opium-smuggler was

brought into the square, before the foreign factories, Crisis. and publicly strangled, amidst much pomp of military

array. As soon as he arrived, Commissioner Lin issued his edict, requiring the foreigners to deliver up to him all the opium on the coast, in order to its being destroyed by burning; that a bond should be entered into that ships should bring no more opium; and that, if any were brought after this, it should be forfeited, and the bringers put to death without controversy. The edict intimated that the foreigners had every thing to hope if they obeyed, and every thing to fear if they were negligent or hostile. At the same time, Lin required the presence before his tribunal of Mr. Dent, one of the most respectable of the English merchants; and to this Captain Elliot consented, on condition that Mr. Dent should be permitted to remain by his side, and not taken out of his sight for a moment. On the same night the factories were blockaded by boats on the river, and soldiery in front and rear; the servants were called out, and provisions prevented from going in. Captain Elliot saw no alternative but delivering up all the opium on the coast of China: he issued an order which summoned all the ships below the Boca Tigris, where 20,283 chests of opium were landed, and delivered over to the Chinese authorities. When the transfer was completed, and not before, the blockade was broken up, and the foreigners set free. Sixteen only were detained at the factories; and, after a time, they were permitted to depart, under an injunction never to return. Captain Elliot wrote urgently to the Governor-general of India, Lord Auckland, in complaint — a complaint which sounds rather strangely to those who understand the nature of the traffic, and the warnings so amply furnished to the traffickers — of that “course of violence and spoliation which had broken up the foundations of this great trade, as far as Canton is concerned, perhaps for ever;” and he requested as many ships-of-war and armed vessels, for the defence of life and property, as could be spared from India.¹

This seems to have been the last point at which a turn might have been made towards the right, and peace have been preserved by an act of simple integrity. The home-government had declared, “Her Majesty’s government cannot interfere for the purpose of enabling British subjects to violate the laws of the country to which they trade. Any loss, therefore, which such persons may suffer in consequence of the more effectual execution of the Chinese laws on this subject, must be borne by the parties who have brought that loss on themselves by their

¹ Annual Register, 1840, p. 247.

own acts.”¹ This is clear enough; and it can never be too deeply lamented that Captain Elliot departed from the whole spirit and purpose of these his latest instructions, by identifying himself, and the imperial authority which he held, with the opium-smuggling, on suppressing which the Chinese government had now staked its power and its character. If he could not help doing this, — if he was pledged by any former acts to stand by the smugglers, — the error is only set back to an earlier date. The thing was now done; Captain Elliot was pledged on behalf of the vicious trade, and had sent to India for as many vessels of war as could be spared.

From this time there was no more peace. From August, 1839, there were affrays between our sailors and the villagers on the coast; thwarting and misunderstandings between the Chinese authorities and British officers; a cutting-off of provisions, and prohibition to trade. Captain Elliot petitioned Commissioner Lin for the restoration of trade, in accordance with the laws of both countries, till he could receive tidings from home; but his petition was contemptuously rejected. Commissioner Lin declared that no intercourse should take place between the two nations till the British sailor who had killed a Chinaman in a fray should be given up. However, the authorities relented so far as to permit trading to go on below the Boca Tigris; and vessels might even have gone up to Canton, if the captains would have signed a bond agreeing that any introducer of opium should be punished according to the laws of China. In Captain Elliot's eyes, such a concession was wholly out of the question, as signing the bond was, in fact, giving over English opium-smugglers to capital punishment at the discretion of the mandarins, whose strictness about evidence might not equal our own. A Mr. Warner, master of the ship “Thomas Coutts,” did, however, sign this bond, without consulting anybody, greatly to the annoyance of the superintendent and the British merchants.² Commissioner Lin was delighted with him, and forthwith insisted that all British vessels should enter as the “Thomas Coutts” had done, or depart within three days. The British believed they saw signs of the Chinese intending to attack their ships; and of course they prepared for battle. The Chinese war-junks anchored near the British ships on the 3d of November, and the English were required to deliver up the offender who had been so often demanded. In reply, the British vessels poured a destructive fire into those of the enemy; and the war was begun. The poor unaccustomed Chinese suffered terribly, and were presently disabled; but they rallied their spirits when they saw the foreign ships retreating to Macao, and supposed that the enemy was as

¹ Hansard, lxxi. p. 273.

² Annual Register, 1840, p. 248.

wretched as themselves; whereas the retreat to Macao was merely for the protection of the merchants, and to aid the embarkation of the British residents.

By the next June, an imposing array of British men-of-war, with attendant steamers and transports, was seen off the coasts of China; and the injured Chinese were doomed. They made what efforts they could to get rid of the encroaching and insolent strangers who had violated their laws to make profit of the intemperance of their people. It is said that they poisoned a boat-load of tea for the use of the British sailors, but that it missed its way, being taken by pirates, so that the wrong party suffered by the device. It is certain that they made many attempts to burn our ships by fire-rafts; and that, in their simplicity, they advertised rewards to persons who should capture Englishmen,—warning them to be particularly careful not to take Portuguese or others,—and no less a sum than 20,000 dollars to any one who should secure one of our men-of-war, carrying not less than eighty great guns, and deliver it to the mandarins. With all this simplicity about war, its horrors were never met or endured by braver men. About this, the testimony is absolutely universal. The most perverse of our countrymen who defend this war at home or on the spot,—who call it a “just, necessary, and honorable war;” who are not afraid to pray for the aid of Heaven against those whom we have oppressed, or to return thanks for victory; or who profess to regard the affair in a missionary light, and talk of bringing the Chinese to the knowledge and love of that Christianity which we have so disgraced in their eyes,—all agree that a nobler courage and constancy were never manifested than by the Chinese who fell in the field, or before their little forts, or on the threshold of their homes, which they had thought safe from invasion for ever, because their own policy was one of peace. British officers might laugh when they saw pasteboard defences, pasteboard men, and wooden cannon, mixed in among the troops, to make a show and terrify the foreigners; and British sailors, little knowing the mental torture they were inflicting, might jokingly secure their prisoners, by tying them together in sixes by their tails: but there was no man, we are told, from the highest officer to the lowest subordinate, who was not touched by the spectacles of devotedness that he saw when citizens cut the throats of wife and children, and then their own, rather than yield to the terrible foreigners; and when officers in the field sought death with desperation when all chance of victory was over. They no doubt agreed with the saying of their emperor, “It is no longer possible to bear with the English.”¹ Gods and men are indignant at their conduct;” and, when they found these hated

¹ Annual Register, 1840, p. 280.

strangers victorious, they could no longer endure life. As they heard, after the first British conquest, that the enemy had pushed their opium-trade vigorously, selling 400 chests at very high prices, they might agree with their emperor's public declaration, that it was worth every effort, in war and watchfulness, to prevent the ingress of that depraving religion called Christianity. They could hardly hold any other view when the only Christians they knew were the opium-smugglers, and the officials who conducted war in their defence. They fought, indeed, with as hearty a hatred of the invaders as ever the Saxons felt towards the Normans of old, or the Mexicans against the army of the United States in our day; and no one can deny that they had cause.

The narrative of the war may be briefly given. The first conquest was of the island of Chusan, which lies about ^{Chusan taken.} midway on the east coast of China Proper. The Chinese admiral, who was also governor of the group of Chusan Islands, was startled by the appearance of a British fleet on the 4th of July, 1840, when he was wholly unprepared for resistance. He went on board the "Wellesley," with two mandarins, when he admitted his weakness, and endeavored, by various devices, to gain time; but he well understood, when he left the ship, that, if he was not prepared to yield up the island by daybreak, it would be taken from him. In the morning, however, a great array of troops was seen on the shore, in and about the chief city of the island, and in the war-junks which had been brought up. Fighting went on all day, and up to midnight, with little or no damage to the invaders. During the night, the British placed ten guns within 400 yards of the city. At daybreak, the flags were flying from the walls as before; but all was quiet within. Only a few unarmed Chinaman were left, who held up a placard on the walls, "Save us for the sake of our wives and children." The British flag was hoisted; and news of this, our first conquest, was despatched to India and home. It was a disastrous conquest for us. The troops drank largely of spirit made from rice; the salt provisions from India were bad, and scarcely any fresh could be obtained. The men were mutinous and sick; and fever so prevailed as to obtain for Chusan the name of our eastern Walcherén. In a very short time, of above 3600 soldiers left in Chusan, more than a third were unfit for duty.

On the 9th of August, Admiral Elliot, who had sailed northwards with a part of the squadron, arrived in the bay ^{Admiral Elliot's mistake} into which the Peho, or river of Pekin, flows. Captain Elliot, who accompanied the admiral, went up the river with armed boats, and obtained an interview with the third man in the empire, Keshen, who was appointed by the emperor to negotiate. The emperor first obtained delay, — during which

the ships laid in supplies of provisions and water,—and then, by some unaccountable means, induced the admiral to transfer the negotiations once more to Canton. The error of leaving the vicinity of the capital, to go and treat in that distant spot, where negotiation had always hitherto been in vain, was severely blamed at home. The matter was not, however, to be again discussed with Commissioner Lin. He was disgraced, and Keshen sent to occupy his post. Admiral Elliot threw up his appointment on the ground of illness.

Keshen's policy was delay. He protracted the negotiations in order to provide defences for the Canton River so far
Commissioner Keshen. superior to any yet encountered by our troops as to prove that even the Chinese could become warlike by practice and experience. When Captain Elliot was worn out by delay, he turned the affair over to Commodore Sir Gordon Bremer, who had no notion of waiting any longer. He opened his fire upon the forts from the river on the 7th of January, 1841, and took two of them. A flag of truce and promises of greater speed arrived the next morning; and, on the 20th, the superintendent
Negotiation. issued a circular announcing the settlement of the preliminaries of a treaty. The treaty contained no mention whatever of the opium-traffic, the sole occasion of the war;¹ and it was otherwise so unsatisfactory that the ministers announced in Parliament, on its arrival, that it was to be disallowed; that Captain Elliot was recalled; and that Sir Henry Pottinger was going out to assume his office.² Meantime, Sir Gordon Bremer, never doubting the fulfilment of the treaty, sent orders to the British in Chusan to evacuate the island; and he took possession, in the name of the Queen, of the island of Hong-Kong, off the mouth of the Canton river,—this island being given to us by the treaty. On the 19th of February, the

Warfare. war was renewed by a shot being fired from one of the islands at a British boat. Our vessels and troops went up the river again on the 26th, and carried all before them,—knocking over the forts, killing several eminent men among the foe, and taking many hundreds of prisoners. By the beginning of March, Keshen had been degraded; and when, on the 5th, the British ships were visible from the walls of Canton, there was no dignity in the city who was empowered to treat with us. The naval and military commanders would have proceeded to take every thing into their own hands; but Captain Elliot requested them to wait till it should appear how the provincial authorities were disposed. Sir Le Fleming Senhouse, who had led the way in the late attacks, chafed under this delay; and Sir Gordon Bremer wrote home his fears that the lenity

¹ Annual Register, 1841, p. 278.

² Hansard. vii. p. 1491.

would be misunderstood. Attacks and retaliation were renewed ; and, before the end of the month, the Chinese flotilla was destroyed, and the union-jack was flying from the walls of the British factory at Canton. It then appeared that Keshen had been waiting for the sanction of the treaty by the Imperial government, and that his government liked the terms no better than ours did. The emperor rejected the treaty, and resolved on war. Sir Gordon Bremer immediately started for Calcutta, to obtain re-enforcements ; and Admiral Senhouse assumed the command in China.

The next movement was an attack by the British, no otherwise provoked than by the spectacle of increasing arrivals of Tartar troops at Canton during six weeks of truce and partial trading. This attack took place on the 24th of May. In two days, Canton was all but taken. It lay completely in the power of the British ; and Sir Hugh Gough, and Admiral Senhouse, who accompanied him into the field, were in high hope of presently announcing the capture of the city, when the superintendent again interfered, and desired them to wait while another treaty was negotiated. Sir H. Gough never concealed his mortification ; and Sir Le Fleming Senhouse retired to his ship, fevered with disappointment, and died, heart-broken, on the 14th of June.¹ Four days after this mournful death, Sir Gordon Bremer returned ; and he was announced to the Chinese as joint-commissioner with Captain Elliot. But their task was taken out of their hands by the arrival of Sir Henry Pottinger, on the 9th of August, — presently after which, the displaced superintendent sailed for Bombay.

Death of
Admiral
Senhouse.

Capt. Elliot
superseded.

Sir Henry Pottinger made a spirited announcement of his intention of closing the war at once, regardless of all mercantile and other retarding considerations, and devoting himself to compel the Chinese to conclude a peace honorable to England. No time, indeed, was lost. Before the end of the month, the city of Amoy was taken, and a garrison was left in an island in the harbor. When the mandarin who was second in command saw that all was over, he rushed into the sea, and drowned himself ; and another cut his throat upon the field. Early in September, Chusan and its city were again taken, though they were now much better defended than formerly.² The large city of Ningpo, fifteen miles inland, fell, undefended, into the hands of the invaders ; and, wherever the British now appeared, little or no resistance was made. An interval of some months, however, revived the courage of the inhabitants ; and, in March, a great body of

Sir H. Pottinger.

Capture of
Ningpo.

¹ Annual Register, 1841, Chron. 209.

² Annual Register, 1842, p. 266.

Chinese came over the walls of Ningpo, early in the morning, to recover the place. The British saw them, and took no notice till the market-place was full of them, when our troops brought up some guns, and made such slaughter, that 250 bodies were left upon the place. There is little record of any loss on our part, though the despatches tell here and there of "severe loss," "a heavy fire," and so on. We read of battles and sieges, with a loss, in one place, of fifteen lives; in another, of two; in another, of none; only "a few casualties from the arrows of the Chinese."

Month after month passed away, and Sir H. Pottinger had not compelled a peace, though the forces took cities and destroyed barracks, magazines, and fortifications, wherever they chose to turn. The appearance of the troops before Nankin settled matters at last, in the summer of 1842. It was the 26th of August, more than a year after Sir H. Pottinger's arrival, when the treaty of peace was finally concluded on between three Chinese and the British commissioner.

By this treaty, the British were authorized to trade freely at four ports besides Canton, and to establish consuls there. The island of Hong-Kong was ceded to them; and they were to hold Chusan and another island till all the conditions of the treaty were fulfilled.¹ Correspondence between officials of the two governments was henceforth to be conducted on equal terms. The Chinese were to pay to the British the sum of 21,000,000 of dollars (4,375,000*l.*); by instalments, in addition to 6,000,000 (1,250,000*l.*) already paid by the authorities of Canton as compensation for the opium destroyed. The instalments of Chinese silver continued to arrive in England at intervals, till all was paid; and thoughtless people in the roads and streets walked beside the heavy wagons with complacency; and others, present at the opening of the chests, looked at the curious coin with amusement and pride. They were led into this by members of the government and of Parliament, who called this "a just and necessary and honorable war;" and by the common run of newspapers, which detailed every fault in the circumstances and civilization of the Chinese, as if we were called as missionaries or liberators to set things right; or imputed bad motives to the emperor in interdicting opium; or applied droll epithets to the Chinese in contempt, and offered literal translations of documents which would not bear a literal translation from even any European language; or related how it took several hours to convey to an educated Chinese the meaning of three lines and a half of an English newspaper; not perceiving the inference that we had probably been misun-

¹ Annual Register, 1842, p. 275.

derstanding the Chinese as thoroughly as they were incapable of understanding us. Insolence and folly like this are very excusable in the ordinary run of untravelled English, who met the wagons of treasure from China, — who conceive of nothing beyond England, and have not any living idea of difference of race, and of mental and political constitution. The disgrace of the levity and insolence rests with the members of Parliament, the popular orators, and the editors of newspapers, who, if they spoke at all, should have spoken with a better knowledge, and more sense of justice and generosity. They should have asked themselves first, under a knowledge of the facts, whether, if they could suppose the English to be right in this quarrel, they could venture to pronounce the Chinese wrong.

It cannot be without much pain and sorrow, that, in a History of the Forty Years' Peace, the narrative can be offered of this Chinese war. It is impossible not to see the insolence of the very term; for, if the Chinese had not been too pacific and helpless to withstand our injuries, we should not have had forty years of peace even to talk about. It is a yet more serious consideration, that, if we had not involved ourselves in wrong, we should not have been under the temptation of shirking the name of war, calling it "operations in China," when we went into the reality. Whichever way we look at this affair, there is no comfort, — at least for those who cannot be comforted with dollars, or pride in our warlike resources and experience. We are hated in China, not only as their conquerors, but for our forcing upon their society the contraband drug which they would have kept out of the reach of the intemperate of their people, — by means which we may laugh at, but which they had a right to adopt. It is an humbling story; and the wonder to a future generation will be, how we bear the shame of it so easily as we do.

It was on the 3d of March, 1843, that the first instalment of the Chinese treasure arrived at the Mint, — an amount of 1,000,000*l.* sterling, — conveyed in five wagons, and escorted by soldiers. By the bursting of one of the boxes, it was seen that the silver pieces were like the half of an egg; and the spectacle so exhilarated the spirits of the "immense crowd" that followed the wagons, that they gave three cheers after the gates of the Mint were closed.¹ In May arrived the presents which the grieving Emperor of China sent to the victorious Queen of England, — a golden bedstead; ear-drops worth 1000*l.* each; a shawl, on which was wrought in needle-work — as if it were a sail for Noah's ark — every kind of beast known to the Chinese; some rare silks, jewellery, and much besides.² It was in the session

Arrival of
treasure.

Chinese
presents.

¹ Annual Register, 1843, Chron. 23. ² Annual Register, 1843, Chron. 63.

of this year that Parliament voted thanks, and government appropriated honors, to the officers and men employed in "the late operations" in China, by whose valor and skill "a series of brilliant and unvaried successes" was given to England to boast of.¹ It was too like praising the skill and valor of a soldier in assaulting a Quaker, even though the resolutions were moved by the Duke of Wellington in the one House, and the high-spirited Lord Stanley in the other.

Parliamentary vote of thanks. The next year, 1844, a Governor-general over our acquisitions in China was appointed; and the choice of the ministers settled on Mr. (now Sir John) Davis, who arrived at Hong-Kong, the seat of his government, on the 7th of May. In the course of the summer, Sir Henry Pottinger, who made the treaty, sailed for England.

Governor-general sent. The question of compensation to the opium-traders long remained a difficulty. The growers of the opium were chiefly the East India Company, who hold the monopoly in India among their territorial privileges. They had sold it to the Canton merchants; and their being paid depended on these merchants being compensated by government for the loss of their 20,000 chests of opium. The Governor-general of India was earnest with government to pay the merchants; and Sir Henry Pottinger officially published his intention of urging their "claims" upon government. "Claims" was certainly the right word, after government had identified itself with the contraband interest in the Chinese war; but the disgrace of countenancing the smugglers, after Lord Palmerston's declaration that they must take the consequences of having violated the laws of China, is one which any Ministry might shrink from encountering. The government, by the mouth of Sir R. Peel, pronounced in favor of adhering to Lord Palmerston's declaration of 1838, so far as to take its own method of deciding how much it would pay; while the owners pleaded that their representatives at Canton gave up the opium to Captain Elliot, on his requisition, "for Her Majesty's service," and on his express pledge that they should be repaid the "value" of it; an expression which he at the time explained to mean the "invoice price."² The claim of the merchants was eventually for the invoice price, with charges for interest and other specified matters of $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The government would not hear of this, but had difficulty in naming the amount for itself. Once it offered to divide among the merchants the 6,000,000 of dollars paid under the treaty as opium compensation; but the claimants spurned it. The issue was, that whereas, taking the price of opium at the lowest during the season of the seizure, the value of the 20,000 chests was 2,042,000*l.*, the gov-

¹ Hansard, lxxxvi. pp. 536, 570.

² Spectator, 1843, p. 539.

ernment offered and paid out of the consolidated fund less than 1,250,000*l*. The House of Commons assented, and took its share of the discreditable course of action of the government in first admitting the liability of government after Captain Elliot's pledge, then offering little more than half the value of the article surrendered; and demanding from the owners an immediate acquittance in full as a condition of receiving any thing at all.¹

Some troubles had occurred in the intercourse of the Chinese and British before Sir Henry Pottinger left China; but his tone, on his return to England, was one of strong hope and confidence. In the manufacturing districts and elsewhere, public dinners in his honor gave him the opportunity of declaring his views. He bore the most emphatic testimony to the high qualities of the Chinese, some of whose statesmen could not be surpassed by any in the world. He plainly told the English that they knew nothing about the Chinese, and were never more wrong than in despising them, or in being careless about violating their customs and hurting their feelings. He trusted that perfect freedom of trade was provided for in that region, if only the British would act with propriety and intelligent consideration. Sir Henry Pottinger was just and generous; but he was over-sanguine in his expectations, as was natural enough in a man of his temperament, who had just succeeded in his aims. Our troubles with China are not over. They are thickening at this day; and a future generation may learn how much of the virtue of free-trade itself may be lost when it is introduced through a process of wrong and violence, under whatever name.

Sir Henry
Pottinger
on China.

¹ Hansard, lxxi. p. 296.

CHAPTER IV.

AMONG the difficulties to which Sir Robert Peel's government succeeded, none was more conspicuous in the eyes of the world than our affairs in India. It was not that misfortunes had happened, such as must be looked for, from time to time, in all dependencies, — a scarcity in one region, a case of disputed succession in another, a discontented border-neighbor elsewhere: there was quite enough of this kind of difficulty. But a far more important embarrassment was, that, under their own Governor-general, Lord Auckland, and by his guidance, the Melbourne Administration had involved themselves in a course of policy which, at the time of Sir R. Peel's accession to the premiership, was actually swamped by disaster.

In 1837, many troubles occupied the attention of the Governor general of India. In the hot plains which stretch south of the Himalayas, and through which the great rivers take their course, famine prevailed to such a degree, that, to use the most forcible illustration offered at the time, the British residents at Agra and Cawnpore were compelled to forego their evening drive, from the air being poisoned with the smell of unburied corpses. The famine was occasioned by drought, and it was followed by diseases as ravaging as itself, — by cholera and small-pox, which swept away thousands whom

hunger had spared. There was insurrection and fighting in Oude about the succession to the throne; and the British took charge of the defeated pretender — a boy — and his grandmother, as prisoners, and imposed on the new sovereign conditions of absolute obedience to the suggestions of the British government. The mountaineer population

Nepaul. of Nepaul are never long quiet; and at this time (1837) they showed themselves disposed to pick a quarrel with us, and rendered it necessary to guard our north-east frontier, in preparation for a rupture. Further round to the east, a potentate whom we had supposed a friend was showing himself

Ava. hostile. The Burmese emperor, Tharawaddee, who had deposed and succeeded an insane brother, had been well thought of till power came into his hands, when he

began to oppress his people, and insult the British, and threaten prodigious things; moreover, he made such preparations for assembling his barbaric rabble, and marching them to the frontier, that we had to provide for the defence of that border too. But even these interests were trifles in comparison with that which carries our view to the north-west frontiers of British India. North-west frontier.

At this date our frontier was determined by the great sandy desert, extending from the jungles on the Gharra, in the hill-states of Gurhwal, to the sea. Beyond this desert, to the north-west, lay the Punjaub, with its five great rivers,—of which Runjeet Singh was the sovereign. Beyond the Punjaub, and west of it, lay the region, perhaps the most interesting in Asia, which has, through all known time, served as the highway between Eastern and Western Asia. This region lies south of Independent Tartary, which is somewhat too savage and inclement a region to serve as such a highway. The region in question, now called Cabool or Afghanistan, lies directly between the Punjaub and Persia; and all the great conquerors Afghanistan. who have penetrated to India from the Caspian, the Black Sea, or the Mediterranean, have done so by crossing the plains and practicable mountain-passes of Cabool. There is an ancient proverb, that no one can be king of Hindostan without being first lord of Cabool. Alexander the Great went by those plains into India, after taking Herat, at the foot of the mountains, near the borders of Persia. Tamerlane conquered the region on his way to the Ganges; and so did Baber, the founder of the Mogul dynasty, before setting up his empire at Delhi. It was from Ghiznee, in that region, that the great enterprise of carrying the Mohammedan religion into India was accomplished by Mahmoud, the founder of the Mohammedan empire in India. There can be no question of the interest and importance of this great district of Asia. The question is, what we had to do with it, and why we did not confine our Indian empire, at least while the Punjaub was still quiet, within the natural frontier—as it had hitherto been considered—of the sandy desert south-east of the Punjaub. To future readers of history, it will probably appear that in the precipitancy of fear, and the confidence of ignorance, the British government rushed into vast immediate peril and disaster, to avoid a far-distant and exceedingly doubtful evil. Forecast in territorial rule is all very well; but we have arrived at an age of the world when forecast avails less than formerly, from the more general diffusion of knowledge and prevalent excitement of the human mind; and it is no longer governments that are capable of the wisest forecast. We have had many broad hints of this within our own century; and no rebuke of such presumption,

and of the policy of rushing into a quarrel to preserve future peace, has been more emphatic than that conveyed in the results of Lord Auckland's Indian policy.

It has been mentioned that Russia had obtained a footing in Persia, as was shown by the emperor being appointed guardian of the succession to the throne, though the arrangement was frustrated by an unexpected death. When Mr. Ellis, our envoy, arrived in Persia in 1835, he found the Russian alliance more prized by the young Shah than the British, and that the emperor's influence was paramount; though it was by means of English money, and the assistance of British officers, that the Shah was seated peaceably on the Persian throne. Such intelligence, arriving in England when the fashion of the time was to fear the power and craft of Russia, revived the old apprehension, that Russia might, sooner or later, begin in earnest her work of conquering Great Britain by getting possession of her Indian territories. Once in close alliance with Persia, and excluding England from friendship and influence there, the emperor would find only Cabool and the Punjaub lying between his armies and our possessions. The matter was made worse — the case more alarming — by the fact that the Shah was at that time, 1835, preparing to make war on the ruler of Herat, and thus to get a footing in the territory of Cabool. In the opinion of the British envoy, there really was good cause for the expedition against Herat: but the ministers of the Shah did not conceal from Mr. Ellis that they had no idea of stopping short at that point, but intended to claim sovereignty for Persia over Ghiznee and Candahar; that is, almost as far as the frontier of the Punjaub. In our existing treaty with Persia, bearing date from 1814, it was provided that Great Britain should take no part whatever, unless as a mediator for peace-making purposes, by request of both parties, in any war between Persia and Afghanistan. This clause rendered it impossible for us to interfere on the present occasion; though the Russian ambassador to Persia evidently supposed that we should, — the desire of England being well known to be that the quarrels among the rulers of Afghanistan should be healed, and the country made strong by the concentration of its districts under one ruler. It seemed to be fear of British interference with the claims of Persia over the great cities of Afghanistan that made the Russian ambassador so eager for the reduction of Herat as to offer his own military services in the expedition.

Mr. Ellis warned the Persian government of the extreme displeasure with which Great Britain would regard any attempt of Persia over Afghanistan, beyond that of settling its quarrel at Herat; and he proposed that that dispute should be disposed

of by negotiation, rather than by war. The Persian ministers appeared to agree to this at first, but soon evaded his offer to send a British officer to Herat for the purpose of settling the affair; Mr. Ellis daily seeing the probability draw nearer of Russian consular agents being established in the great towns up to the very borders of the Punjaub. Under such circumstances, Persia would no longer be an outwork for the defence of India, as she had hitherto been considered, but rather must be watched as an advanced post of the enemy.

There were endless quarrels among the rulers of different cities and districts of the Cabool territory, whether of the same or different families. It would merely confuse our narrative to go at length into these. ^{Rulers of Afghanistan.} It is sufficient to say here that the ruler of Herat was the only prince in the country of the race of the founder of the Afghan empire. The rulers of Cabool and Candahar were usurpers; and they were derived on one side of their house from the Persians, through the Kuzzilbashs,—the tribe of descendants of the Persian soldiers who were stationed in the mountains north of the city of Cabool. There being thus some ground of alliance between these princes and the Shah, Mr. Ellis was further alarmed by their offering to support the Shah against the ruler of Herat, if he would aid them on the side of the Punjaub, where they were in fear of the power of Runjeet Singh. A similar application was made, at the same time, to the court of Russia. It appeared as if every thing was conspiring to bring Russia, Persia, and the rulers of Afghanistan at once, in armed alliance, within a stone's cast of our Indian frontier. It thus became all-important, in the view of the British officials at the Persian court, to secure the independence of Herat; and when terms of reconciliation were offered by the ruler of Herat, the Shah was advised by the British envoy to accept them, and warned that, if he did not, he would lie under the suspicion, with the British government, of having ulterior objects in his warlike preparations. He chose to proceed, however, and set out for Herat at the end of July,—the Russian government at St. Petersburg declaring that this was against advice from Russia, which had counselled delay and negotiation, in order to avoid war. Much of the mischief now brewing arose from the impossibility of knowing what was true about the conduct of Russia. While professions of peaceable counsel were made at St. Petersburg, British officers in the interior of Asia were reporting of the appearance of Russian agents, who made large promises of support against Herat, and offered news of a great Russian army on its march. There is no saying what was true, and what was not; but it is too plain that British officers forgot how strong our forces would prove them-

selves on our own territory, and how much Russia must go through before she could show herself there. A mere glance at the map might have made them ashamed of their panic; and they must have known much more than the map can tell of the difficulties of the march of an army from Russia to the desert below the Gharra; of the snows and the sands, the heats and the frosts, the rocky defiles and the barren plains, which a wearied army must pass, and know to be in their rear, before they could get a sight of our territory and opposing forces. By such panic on the part of British officers, it was decided to save Russia a large part of these dangers, by plunging into them ourselves, in order to meet her half-way.

The ruler of Cabool, Dost Mohammed, in his fear of attack from the Punjaub, applied not only to Russia and Persia for help, but to the Governor-general of India. British agency at Cabool. Lord Auckland, in reply, sent Captain Burnes on a commercial mission to Cabool, where he arrived in September, 1837, while the Shah of Persia was slowly making his way from his own capital in the direction of Herat.¹ Before his arrival, a Persian agent had settled at Candahar; and the Persian was for ever busy showing the Afghan rulers how much more advantageous the Russian and Persian alliance would be to them than the British. Captain Burnes represented to his government that he was somewhat coolly treated; and, in consequence, he was invested with political attributes not at all contemplated in the first instance. From this moment, Lord Auckland entered upon that course of supposed competition with Russia in the East which led to disasters greater than Russia could ever have inflicted upon us if we had remained quiet within our own frontier. The ensuing months were spent in efforts of the Russian and British agents to outwit and countermine each other at Cabool. It will be evident that here every thing depended on the sincerity of Dost Mohammed and the judgment of Captain Captain Burnes. Burnes,—about both of which different opinions existed at the time. Subsequent events have thrown light on the character of Captain Burnes's mind. The goodness of his heart and of his purposes is not doubted; but it appears that he was confident in pursuing a policy of over-caution, and credulous while following up a track of suspicion. We do not know, and can never know, how far his being possessed with a set of ideas colored to him the facts before his eyes; nor do we know any thing of the worth of his authorities. Our confidence, however, is not increased by the fact that he was vehemently hated by the chiefs. He acted much on reports of private interviews and conversations, as well as written correspondence. Of course he

¹ Annual Register, 1839, p. 325.

vouched for the goodness of his information ; but he was equally confident on that last fatal morning when he sat down to breakfast in his house at Cabool, while his murderers were gathering in the street. He continued to send communications of a "startling nature;" and Lord Auckland continued to be startled, in apparent blindness to the impracticability, or, to say the least, the extreme wildness of the enterprises imputed to Russia.

Meantime, Herat held out, month after month, against 40,000 men and 80 pieces of cannon; and its protracted defence was mainly owing to the skill of an English officer, Lieutenant Pottinger, within the walls, in contravention of the skill of Russian officers who directed the siege without.¹ The lapse of time made the defence of Herat of more importance continually, as insults were heaped upon the British more abundantly, and as it became more evident that the independence of Afghanistan depended on that of Herat, whose former offence against the Shah was considered by our envoys to be fully expiated by repeated reasonable offers to treat. In the course of 1838, our envoy in Persia had set out for the Turkish frontier on his way home, and five British ships of war were in the Persian Gulf, having landed troops in the island of Karak; the treaty between Candahar and Persia was made and signed, under the superintendence of a Russian agent, and Captain Burnes had been advised to leave Cabool.² It was believed that Dost Mohammed and the Russian agents were tampering with the rulers of Sind, to induce them to trouble British India through all its western provinces; and it was feared that news had spread up to the mountain-tops of Nepaul, and down the remotest branches of the Ganges, that a great trial of power was taking place between Russia and England at Herat, and would soon be witnessed in the British Indian territories. It is a curious incident in the midst of these alarms, and one which, as it appears, should have brought the alarmists to some reflection, that Herat did not fall. The Persian army, backed by all the power of Russia, as was said, could not take this one city, defended for ten months under the direction of Lieutenant Pottinger. On the 9th of September, 1838, the Shah broke up his camp, and set forth homewards, having gained no successes, but lost many men, and wasted much treasure. At the same time, the Russian government plainly denied, when called to account, having ever dreamed of disturbing our Eastern possessions; declared that it had never ceased to protest against the siege of Herat; and that, when the Shah persisted in that war, it had stipulated, that Herat, if captured, should be annexed to Candahar, that the integrity of Afghanistan might be preserved.

¹ Edinburgh Review, July, 1840, p. 341. ² Annual Register, 1839, p. 333.

Among these contradictory accounts, it has never been settled what was really true,—whether the Russians moving about in Afghanistan were political adventurers on their own account, as well as commercial government agents; whether the British agents were justified in their suspicions, or were deceived; and whether Russia was betrayed by her own servants, or foully attempted to betray us. However this was, preparations were already making by the Indian government for the invasion of Afghanistan; and, at the very time, Russia was recalling both her agents, sending to Persia an envoy more acceptable to England, and to Candahar an agent expressly charged to enter upon none but commercial negotiations. With these arrangements, our foreign Minister declared himself abundantly satisfied; and it shows how intense and unreasonable was the fear of Russia in some minds at that time, that for this our foreign Minister was actually believed by certain persons to be in the interest—even in the pay—of Russia.¹ To most, however, it was enough that Lord Durham first, and Lord Clanricarde afterwards, at St. Petersburg, were satisfied with the declarations of Russia; and Lord Palmerston, at home, with the explanations of the Russian ambassador; while the Russian agents in the East were changed on our complaint; and, above all, Herat was not taken. But our political agents in India appear still to have been possessed of the idea which led the British so far beyond their own frontier and the ordinary range of their concerns.

The most decided act of interference in affairs beyond the province of the British was in the Governor-general's proclamation of the 11th of October, 1838, published to the Bengal division of the army at Simla, on the Jumna.² This manifesto relates the particulars of our disagreement with Persia; exhibits the unfriendly dealings of Dost Mohammed of Cabool towards our ally of the Punjaub, Runjeet Singh, and his evident disinclination to have dealings with the British; and declares, that, as there could be little hope of tranquillity for our north-western provinces in such a state of things, it was determined to depose the rulers of Cabool and Candahar, who were of a usurping race, and to place Shah Soojah on the throne. It had often been said before this time,—and it has been earnestly repeated since,—that the way to have peace in India is to send out soldiers, rather than civilians, to be governors-general; and certainly this declaration of war goes far to confirm the saying. It is scarcely conceivable that a great military ruler could have done an act so rash as Lord Auckland did in thus proclaiming war. He was no doubt wrought upon by military advisers in a way that a military governor-general

¹ Note, December 20, 1838.

² Annual Register, 1839, p. 339.

would not have been; he knew less than a soldier would have done what such a war imports; and no soldier could easily have proved himself less of a statesman than the whole conception of this Afghan war proved its responsible author.

In England, and half over India, people asked who was Shah Soojah. His story was this: The descendants of Ahmed Shah, the founder of the Afghan Empire, were ^{Afghan Prince.} driven out of its eastern portion by means of an able minister of one of them, who, being of another tribe, divided the governments of Cabool, Peshawur, and Candahar, among his brothers, who left only Herat, as has been said, to the old reigning family. The Prince, whose Minister thus encroached upon his power, was called Mahmoud; and this Mahmoud had himself deposed his half-brother, who reigned at Cabool. This half-brother was Shah Soojah. Thus, Shah Soojah belonged to the original ^{Shah Soojah.} ruling family; he was deposed by Mahmoud, his half-brother; it was Mahmoud's Minister who provided for the expulsion of the family; and it was one of this minister's ^{Dost Mohammed.} family, Dost Mohammed, who now ruled at Cabool, and whom Lord Auckland had resolved to depose. It may be mentioned that the usurping family had once set about restoring Shah Soojah to his throne, after his escape from captivity in the Punjaub; but he offended them, and they transferred their nominal favor to his brother Eyoob. But they, in fact, reigned without interruption,—setting aside the claims of even the son of their eldest brother, who died after seeing his fine province of Cashmere annexed to the Punjaub, and Peshawur reduced to the condition of a vassal city; and Balkh incorporated with Bokhara; and the Ameers of Sind declaring themselves independent. Thus, the Afghan Empire was much weakened at the time when Lord Auckland declared war against it, for the sake of setting up in it a sovereign who would keep the peace with us.

The plan was, that the British, Runjeet Singh, and Shah Soojah, should co-operate for the objects of all three. The ^{Scheme of} new Afghan ruler was to enter upon his dominion ^{alliance.} surrounded by his own troops, and supported by the British, who should retire, and leave the country altogether when the restoration should be fully accomplished. Herat was to be left as it was; and a guaranteed independence was to be offered to the Ameers of Sind.

These Ameers of Sind were a family of ten or twelve brothers and cousins, sons of the four Ameers, brothers, ^{Ameers of} who had ruled Sind in peace with each other. The ^{Sinde.} fathers of the present Ameers had released themselves from their half-yearly tribute to the Afghan rulers; and now, Runjeet

Singh was demanding a large tribute. It was from these tributes that Sindé was released by the present treaty.¹ The Ameers were to permit the British to march through their country; and the force from Bombay went up through the heart of it, on the Indus, while some of the Bengal troops crossed the northern portion. The army was, however, so ill-treated in the Ameers' country, and the princes were themselves so evidently hostile, that it was necessary to bring a second force from Bombay to keep Sindé quiet in our rear; and then, again, to compel the Ameers to permit us to keep an army permanently in their country, on the west side of the Indus, — three of the Ameers paying 30,000*l.* a year for the maintenance of these troops. Thus were our operations and our embarrassments extending, when we had once put our hand over our own frontier; and thus did one act of interference necessitate more. It was for less than two years that Sindé remained even manageably tranquil under this last arrangement.

At the end of November, 1838, Runjeet Singh and Lord Auckland met at Ferozpore, the last of our settlements in the north-west, and, of course, the nearest to the Punjaub. The meeting and greeting of the rulers, their retinues and armies, was a very splendid sight. Sir Alexander (late Captain) Burnes was sent on in advance of the expedition; and the army that followed was much reduced, in consequence of the news having arrived of the retreat of the Shah of Persia to his own dominions. It was believed, that, in the present state of affairs, a very easy task lay before the British forces.

The most direct road for the invaders would have been to have crossed the Punjaub from Ferozpore, in the direction of Peshawur; but, as we have said, the Bombay troops had a troublesome passage through Sindé. In fact, they had to fight their way up, taking cities along their course. The Bengal force, therefore, went down to the south-west to meet them; and the junction was effected at Shikarpore, within the boundaries of Sindé, near the Afghan frontier. The command of the expedition was given to Sir John Keane, the Bombay commander-in-chief. The meeting was not a very cheering one. Shah Soojah was there with his troops, who formed the centre of the army. The British forces had suffered much from the fatigues of the way, and yet more from the attacks of the Beloochees, who by no means approved this invasion of the State which adjoined theirs on the north, by means of humbling that which lay on the east. The army was already more reduced than by a great battle. But the worst was before them. It was March; and the heat in the jungles was overpowering, while in

¹ Treaty, March 11, 1839.

the mountain-passes snow drove in the soldiers' faces. The Beloochees were always like a whirlwind in flank and rear, — never in front, — catching up every straggler, and sweeping off camels, provisions, and baggage. The enemy dammed up the rivers, so as to flood the plains; and the force had to wade, for miles together, between dike and dike, with only the jungle in alternation. The days of their going through the ^{Bolan Pass.} Bolan Pass were great days for the banditti of the region, and for their chief, the holder of the strong fortress of Khelat, who was now negotiating with the British political agent on the one hand, while, on the other, he was sending out his robber force to strip the army in the Bolan Pass. The tents that were left among the rocks and snow, the camels and their loads, were the booty of the Beloochees; and the troops emerged from the Bolan Pass, hungry and destitute; the soldiers put on half-rations, and the camp-followers fighting for the remains of the horses that fell dead upon the road. Shah Soojah's force was reduced from 6000 to 1500 men; and the British officers wrote home that the march had no parallel but in the retreat of the French from Moscow.¹

Candahar was undefended, — its prince having repaired to his brother, Dost Mohammed, at Cabool. The aged Shah Soojah entered Candahar on the 24th of April, and was there ^{Candahar.} crowned in May, amidst loud expressions of joy, with which the angry people covered their discontent for the present. After a few weeks spent in recruiting the strength of the army and collecting provisions, Sir J. Keane proceeded to attack Ghiznee, — one of the strongest fortresses of that strongly fortified country. The journey was difficult and tedious; but the siege and storming of Ghiznee were admirably man- ^{Ghiznee.} aged. The son of Dost Mohammed was taken prisoner; and the Dost himself, on hearing the news, dispersed his force, and left Cabool to Shah Soojah, who entered it on the 7th of August.

The British now supposed that all was done. Dost Mohammed was known to have fled into Bokhara; new governors were appointed in the place of such chiefs as would not acknowledge the restored sovereign; and the bandit fortress of ^{Khelat.} Khelat was taken by General Willshire. The invaders rejoiced as if there were nothing hollow in this sudden conquest, — as if the Dost was not to come back, nor the Ghilzee chiefs to rise, nor Khelat to be taken from us, — all of which happened very soon. Sir J. Keane left at Cabool a force much too small for a position so dubious; and, while there were too

¹ Annual Register, 1839, p. 342.

few men, there were far too many women and children. The slightest knowledge of the character of the people ought to have shown the managers of the invasion that this was no place yet for the residence of English ladies and young children, or for thousands of helpless camp-followers hanging about the soldiery, whose utmost efforts might be required at any moment. In the rash confidence which marked the whole series of transactions, Sir Alexander Burnes encouraged any and everybody to sit down beside him in Cabool, where he cultivated his garden, wrote gladsome letters to Scotland, and praised the people by whom he was soon to be murdered; and Mr. McNaghten, appointed political resident, never doubted about settling his wife in the same place; and other officers naturally shared in the confidence of these leaders. No less naturally did the government at home share that confidence; and, with a haste which now looks like a satire on the wisdom of the Ministry and Parliament of the time, honors were lavishly decreed.¹ Mr. McNaghten and Colonel Pottinger were made baronets; Sir J. Keane was raised to the peerage, and Lord Auckland was made an earl. By the Governor-general's order, the troops were not only well rewarded with pay, but they were to bear on their regimental colors the word "Afghanistan." Another bitter satire!

In October, the army returned to India,—one portion to Bengal, under Lord Keane; the other, through the Bolan Pass, to the Indus, and thence to Bombay. The very insufficient force left behind was placed under two commands,—General Nott having charge of Candahar and the southern region as far as the Bolan Pass; and Colonel Sale, the northern, from Ghiznee to Cabool and Jelalabad. The British army had scarcely disappeared before it became plain that Shah Soojah was hated with a hatred too strong for concealment,—hated as being as much worse than the British, as a domestic traitor is worse than a foreign foe. He was looked upon as having sold his country to the infidels; and, before the year was out, he received intimations that some who had sworn allegiance to him under British compulsion were on the look-out for the Russians, whom they would immediately join.² It really seemed as if we had been helping the Russians, instead of raising any barrier against them.

Meantime, it seemed to the alarmists, who managed political affairs in this quarter, as if Russia were really coming to India. She was, in fact, aiming towards the north-west corner of

Khiva.

Bokhara, where Khiva extends,—a district which lies between the Caspian, Persia, and the Oxus, and whose inhabitants were declared to have incurred the wrath of the

¹ Hansard, li. pp. 1173, 1331.

² Annual Register, 1840, p. 229.

Russian government by annoying such of their neighbors as were Russian subjects, exacting tribute from Russian caravans, and interrupting the regular trade of Central Asia. Such, whether true or not, were the allegations of the Russian government.¹ A more prominent charge still, and that which occasioned a formal declaration of war in December, 1839, was, that the Khiva people made slaves of all the Russians they could lay their hands on. The fisherman on the Caspian was carried away from his nets, and the travelling-merchant from his goods. Khiva merchants had been detained as prisoners in Russia, till the slaves should be set free; but only 100 had been restored, while 200 were in course of capture on the shores of the Caspian alone. So the emperor threatened vengeance on Khiva. But the elements were too strong for even the wrath of a czar. The soft-falling snow — silent and persevering — stopped the echoes of his royal thunder, and stifled his complaints, and barred his progress, and buried some of his men and horses, and turned back the rest. Little Khiva defied great Russia, as little Circassia had long been doing. Here was another lesson for us on our haste in making war for the sake of future peace; on our rashness in invading neighbors as a precaution against a far-distant enemy, who might never be able to get at us, even if he wished it. He would certainly not come down upon us through Khiva. And now, our experience of army-travelling in Afghanistan might well abate our apprehension that Russia could meet us in the field, after a prodigious journey, of which such a country as this was the last stage.

In 1840, Khelat was taken from us again; the little garrisons and detachments scattered through the country were ^{Khelat} harassed by the incessant watchfulness rendered ne- ^{Lost.} cessary by the hostility of the tribes in their neighborhood; Colonel Sir Robert Sale found that treaties and agreements with the chiefs of the mountain-district of Kohistan, which was under his charge, were absolutely vain, — the inhabitants thinking bad faith a virtue in such a cause. They harbored the Dost, and played tricks for him, and fought with him; but the gallant Sale put them down, — finally, as everybody thought, ^{Troubles of the British.} on the 2d of November, — little dreaming what was to happen on that day twelvemonths. Dost Mohammed walked through the British camp, with a single follower, actually unobserved, entered Cabool, and surrendered himself. He was sent to Calcutta, and finally permitted to settle at Loodianah, at the extremity of our territory, and on the frontier of the Punjab.² He was a captive whom it gratified the complacency of the authorities to receive and have under their eyes; for, the more

¹ Annual Register, 1840, p. 231.² Annual Register, 1841, p. 273.

doubtful a policy, the more precious are its incidental fruits. Dost Mohammed had polite and cheerful manners ; and he was entertained with delighted hospitality. London people heard of him at the time as being at the Governor-general's parties, and playing chess with the Governor-general's sister. As he was fingering the pieces, no one knew better than he what a game was meditated, and actually begun in his own home beyond the Punjaub, — what checks and overthrow were prepared for those who were smiling upon him as the pledge of their being sure of their game.

In April, 1841, Major-general Elphinstone assumed the command of the troops in Afghanistan. This officer had won reputation in the Peninsular war ; but he was now old, in bad health, and, as soon appeared, so weakened in mind as to be unfit for any military duty whatever. In May, Major Pottinger arrived from Calcutta, having been appointed political agent for Kohistan. The moment he arrived, he saw —

and said in proper quarters — that the force left was altogether insufficient for the need ; and that it was necessary to prepare for risings of the Ghilzee chiefs at any moment. Sir William M'Naghten, usually as sanguine as his comrades, admitted that there might be some truth in this, — Lord Auckland having forced upon him a reduction of the allowances to the chiefs, at the very moment when their good-will was most indispensable.¹ The enmity of the Ghilzees had been, in fact, exasperated beyond hope of accommodation by a mistake committed a few months before, when a British officer had slaughtered a small garrison friendly to the Shah, on the supposition of their being foes.² A chief was among the victims, to avenge whom 5000 Ghilzees took up arms ; and, during the first months of 1841, they were watching only for an opportunity.

During this season of suspense, there were changes going on behind them which would have materially altered the position and prospects of the British at Cabool, if a speedy fate had not been preparing for them on the spot. The Punjaub was in a hopeless state of disturbance. Runjeet Singh, "our faithful and highly valued ally," as the government proclamation styled him, had died ; and the two next heirs were already snatched away — in the course of a few months. The new rajah was believed to have been poisoned. His son and successor, returning from the funeral, was struck by a beam which fell from a gateway upon his elephant, and died in a few hours, at the age of twenty-two. The disputes about the succession which now took place between the widow of the elder deceased rajah and an illegitimate son of Runjeet Singh, let loose all the

¹ Eyre's Journal, p. 16.

² Annual Register, 1841, p. 274.

passions of the turbulent Sikhs; and the Punjaub could no longer be regarded as a friendly and safe country, immediately in the rear of the Cabool force, into which they might retreat if pressed by misfortune. Another event of material importance was the recall of Lord Auckland by the new government at home, who sent out Lord Ellenborough in his stead. How far the invasion of Afghanistan would be sanctioned and supported by the new Governor-general, would soon appear.¹ Meantime, those who approved the late policy were sorry that the ruler who was responsible for it was withdrawn; while those who saw in this policy the operation of irresponsible military counsels, through the inexperience and ignorance of a civil ruler, were sorry that another civilian was sent out instead of one of our great soldiers, who might not only look to the proper conduct of our new war, but, from his experience of the evils of war, might save us from going further in our course of aggression in Asia.

Recall of
Lord Auckland.
Lord Ellen-
borough.

It was an anxious summer for the British at Cabool. They were living in cantonments near the city.² Their position was so arranged as that they were a mile and a half from the citadel, — the Bala Hissar, — where Shah Soojah resided; and a river lay between. All the four corners of the cantonments, where there were defences, were commanded by hills or Afghan forts; and their provisions were actually stored in a fort at some distance from cantonments. General Elphinstone became more and more helpless; and he called in, as his adviser, an officer whose sole thought was to get back to India, and who therefore discouraged every effort to strengthen the position of the Cabool force. From the moment that a force knows itself to be ill commanded, its heart and soul die out; and so it was now. The officers grew moody and disheartened, as they saw their situation becoming dangerous; while it seemed too plain that they would neither be allowed to prepare for defence now, nor to fight hereafter. The men were worn and weary with incessant watching, with bearing the insults of the natives, and with receiving frequent tidings of their comrades being picked off by roving enemies, as often as opportunity offered. The ladies occupied themselves with their gardens, which, in that temperate climate, rewarded all the pains taken. Sir Alexander Burnes gloried in his, which was attached to his house in the city; and, during these last months of his life, he was as confident and gay as ever. He had real friends among the Afghans; and these friends warned him again and again of danger, — told him that he was deceived; that the ground was mined beneath his feet; and that he must save himself now, or

The British
at Cabool.

¹ Annual Register, 1841, Chron. 130.

² Eyre's Journal, Map.

not at all. He did not believe a word of it. He kept his fears for Russia, and was perfectly satisfied about Afghanistan. The envoy, Sir William M'Naghten, was less happy. One of the last things he said — in the next December — was, that a thousand deaths were better than the hell of suspense he had lived in for six weeks; and already he was having some foretaste of that bitter suffering.¹ The aged Shah Soojah could do nothing. He was merely a puppet-prince set up by us, in the absence of any real call to the throne. He remained retired in the Bala Hissar, hated by the people, and pitied by the British for his contemptible position, — some few, the while, strongly doubting his fidelity. We find throughout the narratives of this war a painful suggestion thrown in here and there, that this or that incident makes for or against the supposition of Shah Soojah's fidelity. For some months there was hope that General Nott was coming on from Candahar, with a clear head upon his shoulders, a cheerful spirit in his breast, and a well-disciplined force at his heels. But he did not appear; and then it became known that he could not come at all at present. He had quite enough on his hands below. Early in September, there were small treasons and skirmishes in the mountains north of Cabool, when parties were out collecting the revenue. Later in September, Major Pottinger came to Cabool with fresh information, which so far convinced Sir William M'Naghten of the probability of a rising in Kohistan, that he resolved to detain as hostages the sons of the great chiefs. Early in October, the second son of Dost Mohammed — that Akber Khan, in whose hand the fate of the British in Afghanistan was henceforth to lie — came down from the north, and posted himself in the Khoord Cabool Pass, ten miles from the city; that pass being the only way back to Hindostan. General Sale, who would have been in his winter-quarters at Jelalabad before this, but for the treasons and skirmishes in the mountains, now set forth to clear this pass. His troops might force it, but they could not clear it. The foe was perched on the rocks, where no guns could be brought to bear upon them; and the British had to run the gauntlet through the whole pass. General Sale was himself wounded.

Akber Khan now had command of the British communications. It is piteous to read of the suspense at the cantonments after this. There were rumors of battles, with great slaughter of the British on the road to Jelalabad; and no letters came to clear up the matter. Sometimes, a messenger arrived; but he only brought newspapers, — not a written line for even the general. Sometimes, a letter or two came with a forged seal, — sometimes a letter which itself appeared to be forged. On the 31st of

¹ Eyre's Journal, p. 165.

October, "no despatches for the general," nor private letters; but further accounts hoped for to-morrow.¹ On that morrow, "no letters from camp, which has caused both surprise and anxiety." This was an easy foretaste of the horrors of the next day,—November 2. On this night, once more and for the last time, Sir Alexander Burnes's Afghan friends came to him with warnings; and this once more in vain. He was as confident as ever. The next morning, while he and his brother and Captain Broadfoot were at breakfast, the street filled, and the cries of the crowd told too well what they came for. Burnes was ^{Rising at} sure it was only a riot, and sprang into the balcony to ^{Cabool.} address the people. The enemy burst in. Broadfoot killed six with his own hand before he fell. All three were murdered on the spot, though Shah Soojah sent word, some hours after, to Sir W. M'Naghten, that all was well with Burnes. Shah Soojah also said, that, if the rebellion was not over that night, he would burn the city the next day; but he neither did that nor any thing else, but order the guns of the citadel to fire,—which they did all day, without any apparent effect.

For two months after this, all was unmitigated wretchedness. General Sale was hoped for,—looked for,—but he ^{Suspense.} did not come. He could not; and his wife and comrades were told it was because his soldiers had forsaken him. General Nott never came,—also because he still could not. Ammunition failed; and, what was if possible worse, food failed. The commissariat fort, which stood detached, as has been said, was taken, through sheer inertness and mismanagement of the authorities. There had been three possible courses for the British,—to go back to India; to remain in cantonments, in a state of defence, till aid should arrive; or to go to the Bala Hissar, and crowd in there, sacrificing the horses, but securing human life at least, till re-enforcements should come. All these were difficult and dangerous, and each entailed great sacrifices; but a vigorous adoption of any one would have left some chance to somebody. But there was no vigor,—no concert: the few who were fit to command, and the many who were ready to act, were paralyzed by neglect and prohibitions. The insulting enemy hovered round, and picked off every straggler, and especially all the messengers whom they could hit. Then there was talk of treaties; and the wretched envoy—the most responsible man, and yet disabled by the imbecility of the general—caught at every false hope thus held out. Rather than endure the daily sight of the perishing force, he went out to treat,—even falling into the snare of negotiating an underhand treaty which no man in any but a desperate condition would have believed attain-

¹ Lady Sale's Journal, p. 31.

able, — and thus losing something of his honor in the eyes of the enemy. He went out to treat, saying to his companions what has been quoted of the horrors of the last six weeks, and was seized by Akber Khan himself, and murdered on the spot. Those who saw the two faces, tell of them as what can never be forgotten: Akber Khan's charged with "diabolical ferocity," — Sir W. McNaghten's, with "horror and astonishment." The Afghans made a plaything of his head, with its green spectacles, and held up one of his severed hands at the prison-window of the officers who had been rescued by the intervention of Afghan chiefs. Captain Trevor, whose wife and seven children were with the force, was murdered with the envoy. This decisive event happened on the 23d of December.¹

The British were now "advised" by the enemy to go back to India; and they were so nearly starved that they agreed to do so, though some of the officers were still of opinion that they should fight their way for the mile and a half which lay between the cantonments and the citadel, and take refuge there, — trusting to the interest of the country-people to supply them with food. They set out, however, some of them knowing that the Afghan chiefs were saying that they would allow only one man to live; that they would cut off his limbs, and set him down at the entrance of the Khyber Pass, with a letter between his teeth warning the British to meddle no more with Afghanistan. Many set forth, believing this boast to be not unreasonable; and it was too true that only one man reached Jelalabad. Those who gave themselves up as prisoners and hostages were saved, — such of them as did not die of fever and hardship, — but only one man performed the march from Cabool to Jelalabad. The doom of the force was clear at the end of five miles. Four thousand five hundred fighting-men, and twelve thousand camp-followers, besides women and children, set forth from Cabool on the 6th of January. The distance traversed that day was only five miles; yet it was two o'clock in the morning before the last of the force came up. The glare from the burning cantonments was visible to the fugitives as they sat in the snow, and heard what had been the destruction already, and knew what a road lay before them. Officers and soldiers lay dead in the bloody snow, all the way back to Cabool; baggage was abandoned at the very gates of the cantonments; the ladies had only what they wore, and some of them, hurried away or sick, wore only night-clothes. Each day was worse than the last. One lady had her youngest boy snatched from her arms by an Afghan; and another saw her eldest girl put into a sack, and carried off. The camp-followers, whose frost-bitten feet would

Retreat of
the British.

¹ Lady Sale's Journal, p. 195.

carry them no further, died by hundreds along the roadside, or crawled in among the rocks, without food, or prospect of any. On the fourth day, only 270 soldiers were left. On the fifth, the loss altogether was 12,000 out of 17,000 men. On the sixth day, there were but twenty to make a stand against the still tormenting foe. Twelve escaped from a barrier which detained them cruelly long under the enemy's fire; and, of these twelve, six dropped before reaching the last town to be passed. Near this town, some peasants offered bread to the remaining six, who were famishing. They stayed a few moments only; but in those few moments the inhabitants were arming. Two were immediately cut down. The other four fled as men may do who have death at their heels, and safety almost within sight; but three of the four were overtaken and slaughtered within four miles of Jelalabad; and Dr. Brydon arrived alone. He was seen from the fort stooping over his jaded pony, evidently wounded,—looking as forlorn in his approach as could be imagined. He was supposed to be a messenger, and the gate was opened in readiness to admit him; but his only message was such a one as perhaps no other man has ever had to deliver,—that he was the sole remnant of an army. Except the burying of Cambyzes' army in the African desert, such a destruction has perhaps never been heard of in the world.

There were more saved, however, than Dr. Brydon knew of. The omnipresent Akber Khan—who had proposed to escort the force to Jelalabad, and then declared Prisoners saved. that he could not protect them—offered to save the ladies and children if the married and wounded officers were delivered, with their families, into his hands. These prisoners were carried about from fort to fort till the next summer, when they were released in consequence of the advance of fresh British troops. General Elphinstone was among the prisoners. He died—greatly to the relief of all to whom his fame, and the respect due to gray hairs, were dear—in the course of this captivity. His case was clear, and government was saved the pain of calling him to account. Among the captives was the remarkable woman to whom we owe much of our knowledge of the incidents of this terrible history,—the wife of General Sale. Her Lady Sale. narrative shows her a true soldier, and one of the bravest. If, in reading her narrative, we almost recoil from the hardihood which could sustain itself in that inaction which is often fatal to high courage, we cannot but fervently admire it in the form of cheerful patience under protracted personal suffering and inconceivable discomforts. Her husband met her and their widowed daughter, with her new-born infant, and the other prisoners, on the 20th of September, 1842, nearly nine months

after the march from Cabool. When General Elphinstone wrote to General Sale, at that disastrous time, to leave Jelalabad, and return to India, the general resolved to hold his post at all risks; and it is said that his captive wife urged him by letter to do so, regardless of the consequences to herself. If so, this meeting of the 20th of September might well be a happy one; for General Sale had held his post till relieved on the 16th of April.

Up to the moment of Lord Ellenborough's arrival, in February, 1842, Lord Auckland had done every thing in his power for the rescue of the force so rashly left in Afghanistan. Troops were sent in abundance; but the difficulty was to get them through the defiles by which the country must be entered. No man yet had ever traversed the Khyber Pass in the face of an enemy,—Nadir Shah himself having purchased a passage from the tribes which guard it; but General Pollock now achieved it, with extreme difficulty and risk, and by means of a strong excitement of the valor of the troops. On the 16th of April, the exhausted

Relief from India. garrison of Jelalabad saw the re-enforcements coming up; and vast was the cheering and firing of cannon.

General Sale had done marvels during the intervening months in repairing his wretched fortifications, procuring food, and keeping off the enemy; and when an earthquake overthrew most of his defences in the middle of February, he set to work again with undiminished spirit. The earthquake brought up Akber Khan, who had finished every thing elsewhere, and now came to drive out the last of the infidels. He was fought with incessantly till the 7th of April, when the hope of the approach of General Pollock justified a decisive attack on the Afghans. The British triumphed, recovered some of the guns lost by their dead comrades in the winter, and burned Akber's camp. It was in this month of April that General Elphinstone died; and also Shah Soojah. Whether this prince remained faithful to us, or turned treacherous, is not understood to this day. It is known

Murder of Shah Soojah. only that he was murdered near Cabool, in the midst of some dispute about an expedition against Jelalabad. Great confusion ensued upon his death; and the course of affairs is wholly obscure till we see Dost Mohammed once more in power.

Sickness and other difficulties detained the British forces at Jelalabad till the end of August. A great number died, and the rest were not in the best condition for forcing the passes to Cabool. It was done, however, and admirably; and the army encamped, on the 15th of September, on the race-ground of Cabool. The British standard was hoisted on the Bala Hissar. The Kuzzilbashes, before mentioned as of Persian descent, and hostile to Dost Mohammed and his tribe,

Cabool destroyed.

were our best friends throughout; and it was by their aid that the prisoners were brought back, when actually on their way to hopeless captivity beyond the Oxus. The Kuzzilbash quarter was therefore spared, in the destruction of Cabool; and so was the Bala Hissar.¹ The rest was laid in ruins; and the first part that was blown up was the bazaar, built in the reign of Aurungzebe. General Nott came up from Candahar, victorious,—though the re-enforcements sent to him from Sinde could not reach him, but were actually obliged to turn back after having traversed the Bolan Pass. Ghiznee had fallen from us too, and its name had lost the glory it had had when it gave his honors to Lord Keane. General Nott, after having evacuated Candahar, fought the Afghans near Ghiznee, and beat them; and ^{Ghiznee de-} was ready to attack the fortress, when it was found ^{stroyed.} that the enemy had retired. The city and fortress were immediately and totally destroyed; and General Nott moved on, fighting one more battle by the way, to join the forces already at Cabool.

The new Governor-general had meantime, by proclamation, ordered the British forces to evacuate Afghanistan. ^{Evacuation of} This proclamation declares it contrary to British ^{Afghanistan.} policy and ideas to force a sovereign on a reluctant people,—a declaration which must have astonished the Afghans; and, adverting to the death of Shah Soojah, promises to recognize any ruler whom the Afghans shall choose, with any prospect of peace, for their country.² In the beginning of November, the British troops left the country which they should never have entered, and where some of them finally disgraced our military reputation by acts of rapine and cruelty, in an expedition in Kohistan, which the Afghans themselves could never have surpassed. It was a fitting end of one of the most iniquitous wars on record. The public despatches and private journals of the time speak, in set terms, of the honor of our arms being avenged, stains wiped out, and so forth; but this is cant. The honor of our arms, among the Asiatic nations as everywhere else, is absolutely implicated with the goodness of our cause. It is questionable whether, in their barbaric view, our cause had ever before been thoroughly bad,—indefensible as have been some of our wars there in the eyes of Christian nations. But in this case we were wholly wrong; and our honor cannot be now—never can be—retrieved in the estimation of the Afghans. For purposes of our own,—foolish purposes, as it happens,—we invaded their country; forced on them a sovereign whom they hated, and who had actually no party among them; invited aggression from them by our weakness and supineness; melted

¹ Annual Register, 1842, p. 256.

² Annual Register, 1842, p. 254.

away under their aggression; and, at last, poured in upon them with overwhelming forces,—blew up their strongholds, razed their cities, hunted their mountain-population “like vermin,” burning, slaying, and ravaging; and then withdrew, giving them leave to place upon the throne the very ruler we had come to depose. We may deceive ourselves with vainglory about our honor; but, as long as tradition lasts in Afghanistan, our name will be a mark for hatred and scorn. The men are gone who did this,—Burnes, M’Naghten, the military advisers who left their bones in the passes beyond the Punjaub, and Lord Auckland himself. But it does not become those at home who were misled by them—it does not become the most irresponsible of us—to forget this great folly and crime, or to attempt to cover it over with cant about the glory of our arms.

When the British force had evacuated Afghanistan, Lord
Lord Ellen-
borough’s
proclamation. Ellenborough addressed a proclamation to the rulers and peoples of India, which soon became very celebrated.¹ It is always a mistake to address people of another race and faith and language than our own, in what is supposed to be their way,—to use big metaphors and fervent exclamations, and make references, in a supposed religious tone, to things which to the writer are not holy. We all saw the folly and bad taste of this in Napoleon’s proclamations, and never believed that they would go down with the Mohammedans and others to whom they were addressed; and now the Governor-general of India made the same mistake at a serious crisis of our affairs in India, when earnestness and simplicity were more than ever necessary in our transactions. The horror excited at home by the apparent sanction given to idolatry in this proclamation, might be exaggerated; but it is certain that affectation, in every way pernicious in so high a functionary, is most eminently so in regard to the most serious of all affairs,—matters of religious faith. In 1831, when Shah Soojah wanted aid from Runjeet

Somnauth
gates. Singh, the aid was promised on three conditions,—one of which was, that the sandal-wood gates of the great temple of Juggernaut, which had been carried to Ghiznee, should be restored. The Shah refused this condition, while agreeing to the others, in a way which showed the point to be of some importance; but whether political, military, or religious, we know too little of the native mind to be certain. Lord Ellenborough, however, ventured to use, in this proclamation, big words of exultation and congratulation about the gates of the temple of Somnauth being brought back from Ghiznee; and the outcry was great, both on the spot and at home,—some fearing that the government would appear to patronize idolatry, and others showing

¹ Annual Register, 1842, p. 257.

how the congratulation insulted one part of the inhabitants while coaxing another. The matter was largely discussed in Parliament in the session of 1843; and due attention was paid to other acts of coxcombry, which seemed to show at once that Lord Ellenborough, with all his heartiness and good-will, and activity and diligence, had not the sobriety of judgment and dignity of manners indispensable in his position. He fraternized with the military in a way very extraordinary in a civilian, and published his military sympathies, so as to give more offence to one set of men than gratification to another. He made showy progresses, and acted out vehemently his idea of Indian government,—a government of coaxing and demonstration, rather than of business-like gravity and silent energy. The East India Directors, who held the opposite idea of government, used their power—a power adverted to so rarely as to have been nearly forgotten—of recalling the Governor-general, without the acquiescence of the Administration. The ministers admitted in Parliament that they had remonstrated strongly against this exercise of the directors' privilege; and it was plain that they were extremely annoyed by it.¹ Though the vote was unanimous, they considered it as great an "indiscretion" as any known in history. It was certainly a serious matter to bring forward the anomaly of the double authority at home: but all anomalies must come into notice sooner or later; and the question was, whether the present occasion was a sufficient justification. The directors thought it was; the government thought not. As for Parliament and the people, they dwelt most on the satisfaction of the recall of Lord Ellenborough. The appointment of his successor was admirable. It united all suffrages of opinion. Sir Henry Hardinge was a soldier, whose military qualifications were indisputable. But he was even better known as a man of a calm, earnest, grave disposition, sound sagacity and conscientious thoughtfulness, excellent habits of business, and most genial and benevolent temper. In him, the qualifications of the civil and military ruler seemed to be so singularly united that he appeared to have been in training all his life for the office he was now to fill. It was on the 21st of April, 1844, that Sir R. Peel announced in Parliament the recall of Lord Ellenborough; and Sir Henry Hardinge arrived in India in the following July.

Sir Henry
Hardinge,
Governor-
general.

Sinde had been annexed to our dominions during Lord Ellenborough's term of office. The agreements we had made with the Ameers, at the commencement of our Afghan enterprise, were not likely to last; and by 1842 we find the Governor-general threatening one of the older generation of

Sinde in
1842.

¹ Hansard, lxxxiv. p. 340.

the Ameers with deposition if he did not pay up his tribute, and prove himself faithful to the British. There was reason to suspect the Ameers of correspondence with our enemies; and their tribute had fallen into arrear. Sir Charles Napier, who commanded the troops in Sind, was authorized by the Governor-general to make a new treaty with the Ameers, by which the British authorities believed that equivalent advantages were secured to the two parties. The Ameers, however, thought otherwise, — estimating the privileges of their hunting-grounds along the Indus more highly than the British ruler conceived of when he stipulated that we should have liberty to cut wood for our steamers along the whole line of the river banks.¹ The treaty was forced upon them; they were irritated; their Beloochee followers were furious, and drove out the resident, who had negotiated the treaty, and his few followers from their fort, compelling them to take refuge on board a steamer in the river. The attack was made on the 15th of February. The next day, Sir C. Napier went after the Ameers, to see what they were about, and found them encamped with 22,000 men, — seven times the amount of his own force. Early in the morning, he brought his small force to bear upon their great army, routed it, and captured all the enemy's artillery and ammunition, their standards, and their camp, with all that it contained. The Ameers yielded up their swords; and, after another victory, Sind was ours. Sir C. Napier has never concealed the fact, however, that his conquest of Sind was determined on before the attack on the resident, and would have taken place just the same if that had never happened.² The battle of Meanee was a great one, valorously and skilfully conducted; and the thanks of Parliament were voted to Sir C. Napier and his coadjutors in consideration of it; but we feel no more moral satisfaction in the contemplation of these events, and the thoughts of our new territory, than in considering our Afghan campaign. We have no business in Sind; and it is a matter for the inhabitants, and not for us, to decide upon, whether they prefer the government of the Ameers, or the "mild sway" which we recommend to them as that of the British government. Probably the Beloochees know too much of our invasion of Afghanistan, and of the condition in which we left it, to have much belief in the mildness and justice of our sway. Meantime, a residence in Sind is a sort of purgatory to Anglo-Indians. The people are manifestly hostile, and the soil and atmosphere most unfavorable to health. Mutiny, the most dreaded of all events in India, was occasioned in 1844 by the mere order to march to Sind; and a regiment was ignominiously broken up on account of its refusal.

¹ Edinburgh Review, 1844, p. 490.

² Edinburgh Review, 1844, p. 485.

We have not done yet with these melancholy Indian victories, and the questionable rejoicings over them at home. Gwalior. The people of Gwalior, in the Scindia dominion, in the heart of our north-western possessions, were disturbed and riotous. We were bound by treaty to give aid in such a case, under certain requisitions: we now interfered without such requisition, on the assumption that it would have been made if a young prince had been old enough, and entered the territory, "not as an enemy, but as a friend to the Maharajah."¹ We established "a strong government," according to British ideas, and were about to depart; but the Mahrattas were not disposed to let us march off so quietly. They challenged us to two great battles, in which the British were victors; and Lord Ellenborough, who was near or on the spot, taking the interest of a strong partisan in the conflict, issued more high-sounding proclamations about the glory of British arms on the plains of Scindia, and the blessings of British intervention within the walls of Gwalior.

One melancholy department of the history of the Russian alarmists in India is the fate of the officers who were employed in anti-Russian missions. Wyburd. Lieutenant Wyburd, a young officer of spirit and enterprise, who was sent on a secret mission to Khiva in 1835, was not heard of again till Colonel Stoddart, as reported by Dr. Wolff, learned at Bokhara that he had been early murdered.² Stoddart. Colonel Stoddart himself was sent on a government mission to Bokhara, and Captain Conolly, in the place of Lieutenant Conolly. Wyburd, to Khiva and Khokan, with instructions to repair to Bokhara, if sent for by Colonel Stoddart. He was so sent for; and there they were executed together, in July, 1843, after long suffering from loathsome imprisonment, and the besetting sense of the precariousness of their life. Those who knew the open-faced, handsome Charles Stoddart, the spirited school-boy, who counted the days till he could begin being a hero, suffered much under the obscure rumors that floated home from time to time,—that he was imprisoned in a well, swarming with reptiles; that he was in high favor, and a professed Mohammedan; that he had been buried alive; that he had been beheaded; that he was still pining in misery. And those who knew the Conolly family now mourn the death of three brothers, at the outset of a career which was full of promise. Arthur, Edward, and John Conolly marched with Sir J. Keane into Afghanistan in 1839.³ One died of fever, a captive at Cabool, only six weeks before the release of his fellow-prisoners; another was shot through the heart in the storming of a fort in the mountains;

¹ Annual Register, 1843, p. 365.

² Hansard, lxxvi. p. 104.

³ Eyre's Journal, p. 325.

and eleven months afterwards, in July, 1843, the last remaining one was executed with Colonel Stoddart, at Bokhara. These young men were relatives of Sir W. M'Naghten, whose wretched fate has been already before us. The truth was not known, with regard to the Bokhara agents, till 1844, when Dr. Wolff offered his services to go in search of them to Bokhara. From thence he wrote, by order and under the inspection of the Khan, an account of the execution of these officers, for such reasons as such a potentate would be likely to give.¹ It appeared that Stoddart had made a temporary and merely verbal profession of Mohammedanism; but that, unable to live under a mask, even in such a place, he had followed it up with an open avowal of his Christian belief. The reports of the miseries of his imprisonment were but too true.

It is a relief to turn from the dreary scenes in the interior of the Asiatic continent to a far brighter one in its Malayan archipelago. In the young days of the existing generation, boys and girls were taught at school that Borneo was the largest island in the world, — Australia then being not fully ascertained to be an island. Among the boys so taught might have been James Brooke, whose imagination, as he grew up, dwelt in the Malayan seas. At length the time came when he found himself sailing in those seas, and thinking what could be done with the piracy there, which so abounds, and is so cruel in its character, as to put a stop to a commerce of extraordinary promise, and to keep the population of the archipelago in a lamentable state of barbarism. James Brooke saw that Borneo produced material for an unlimited commerce: "Within the same given space, there are not to be found equal mineral and vegetable riches in any land in the world."² He saw that the people, from being barbarous and in a precarious condition as to life and welfare, might be civilized and Christianized. To this enterprise he devoted his life and all his resources. In 1838, he went forth in a schooner of his own, on a voyage of preliminary exploration.³ In August, 1839, he was well received by the Rajah of Sarawak, — on the north-west point of Borneo; this rajah being the uncle and deputy of the Sultan of Borneo. In return for aid against rebels, the rajah offered him the government of Sarawak, — thus furnishing him with the opportunity he desired on behalf of his scheme. We next see him Rajah of Sarawak, happy in witnessing the striking improvement of the people under his sway in character and fortunes. The great drawback was the pirates, who swarm in all the intricate passages of those seas. The value of Rajah Brooke was by this time

¹ Spectator, 1844, p. 731.

² Brooke's Journal, i. p. 194.

³ Brooke's Journal, by Mundy.

seen; and views began to open upon government, and everybody who knew the story of his importance in our national history, as the discloser of a vast new commerce, and the simple-minded regenerator of barbaric populations. At the close of the Chinese war, the "Dido," and afterwards the "Samarung," were ordered forth against the pirates, and broke up several of their strongholds. Mr. Brooke accompanied these ^{Malayan} expeditions; and, in 1845, a further proof in the eyes of the Sultan of his credit with the British government was given in his appointment to be the agent of his sovereign in Borneo. The Sultan besought our assistance for the further suppression of piracy, and ceded to us the little island of Labuan, not far from the Bornean capital, as a naval station, on the way between India and China. The Sultan, how-^{Labuan}
^{ceded to}
^{Britain.} ever, was as weak and untrustworthy as such potentates are apt to be. He was won over from the British by intrigue, slew those of his relations who were favorable to them, and countenanced the piratical acts of his own subjects. When he was proceeded against with them, in 1846, he fled into the interior of the island, and would not return. The British officers therefore left with the people a statement of the facts of the case, and of the reasons of their conduct, to be shown to the sultan, whenever he should re-appear. In all these proceedings, there has been no pretence of conquest for selfish purposes; and, thus far, the presence of the British appears to be a pure blessing to the people of Borneo. Rajah Sir James Brooke has since been in England, receiving honors from Queen and people; and he has gone to the East again, unspoiled by homage, and unrelaxing in his energy, to accomplish, as Rajah of Sarawak and Governor of Labuan, the objects which he proposed when plain James Brooke, with no other outward resources than his own little schooner, and the means of negotiating for a cargo of antimony. There is more satisfaction in recording an enterprise so innocent in its conduct and so virtuous in its aim, than in making out a long list of Afghan and Sindian victories, with the thanks of Sovereign and Parliament for a commentary.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN the ministers met Parliament in the beginning of 1842, their party strength appeared to be greater than that of any Administration for a long course of years. Judging by the numbers in the House of Commons, the invariable preponderance of the Conservative interest in the House of Lords, and the satisfaction throughout the country at the accession of a strong government which understood its work, there was nothing that the Minister could not do,—no reason why he should not play the dictator,—only keeping within the customary forms of ministerial conduct. But there was something at work stronger than party support and national acquiescence. There was something at work inwardly in the minister's own mind, and outwardly among the elements which create human food, that was about to frustrate all calculations, and break up a state of things which appeared to have just settled into permanence. The disintegration of parties which some men had foreseen must happen sooner or later, was now presently to begin. The Whig party was gone,—never to be revived. There was no general reform section to take its place; but the Anti-corn-law League was now so active, and so considerable in the nation's eye, that any one might see that a free-trade party would soon take the lead on the Liberal side. On the other side stood the vast Conservative body,—apparently all-powerful, but, in fact, powerful only precisely so far as it had accepted and assimilated liberal principles. Sir Robert Peel and his immediate coadjutors had accepted and assimilated most of these liberal principles; and in them, therefore, lay the main strength of the party. When they emerged as Liberals from the Conservative host, the rest had but little force, and scarcely any principle of cohesion. The strongest and most united portion of them came into natural antagonism with the free-trade party, and have struggled on, under perpetual failure, with the title of Protectionists, to this day. The adherents of the Minister composed a sort of party, for as long as the discussion of a free-trade policy enabled them to remain separate from the free-traders; but, of course, when the Minister had carried his free-trade measures, and taken leave

of power, his temporary party could no more maintain an independent existence than a military company, employed on a particular service, can constitute a separate body when the achievement is completed, and they have returned to the main body of the army. To be a Peelite was a most significant position for five years; but when the Minister had accomplished his work of free-trade, and retired from power for ever, his staff necessarily dispersed, and no vestige of their separate aggregation remained.

It was a serious thing to be the man by whom the disintegration of parties was to be apparently caused. That such a dissolution should take place, sooner or later, was inevitable, — whoever might live or die, or rule or retire; and that it should take place within a certain limit of time or circumstance was a necessary consequence of the peace. When peace was concluded, and when afterwards Canning was devoting himself to preserve it, preparation was in fact made for that dissolution of parties which was now to be attributed solely to the action of Canning's political heir. It is because war is retardation, that parties live as long as it lasts. It is because peace is progress, that peace is the death-warrant of parties. In a condition of peace, when new questions and progressive policies arise, and arts and inventions flourish, which change the condition and relations of whole classes of men, political interests must be subject to renovation, like every thing else; and political representatives will band themselves together in new combinations, and old organizations will dissolve. Seen in advance, this reconstitution of parties for express aims appears a good; looked back upon from a far-future time, it is clearly seen to be a great good: but, at the time, the preliminary dissolution is a grave evil, and it is a serious thing to be the man by whom it is effected. It is a grave evil that the business of the country is ill done, or remains undone, for want of united action in Parliament. It is a graver evil that men think ill of each other, as they almost unavoidably do, while each is following his own notions, and therefore appearing to be straying wide of any "principle." Oppositions of opinion are respectable in the eyes of antagonists while the opposition is single, and has a centre round which men gather; but men lose their liberality when they see their neighbors, late comrades of their own, wandering into this or that field of opinion, or forming new conjunctions with old opponents. Then imputations fly abroad, not only of intellectual weakness, but of political dishonor. Mutual confidence is gone; and temper and manners follow. Party violence is bad; but it is nothing to the violence which succeeds a dissolution of parties. Grave as are these evils, there is yet a graver. In the interval — usually an interval of years —

between the disintegration of old parties and the constitution of new ones, while a tentative or accidental fusion takes place here and there, now and then, which gives way again, and proves that such associations cannot be arbitrarily formed, but must grow out of some living principle, — during such an interval, the country is certain to be badly governed. A principled government — a government which had a policy — would inevitably and instantly create parties. The non-existence of parties is an infallible indication that the government is a desultory and not a principled one; and, of all misfortunes that can befall a nation, none can be graver than this. Such a government cannot endure for many years, even in the absence of all organized opposition, and in the enjoyment of that self-confidence and apparent strength which arise from its having all its own way, through the unwillingness of political men to displace it till they are provided with a party and a policy, or their inability to displace it by a merely desultory opposition. But, while it lasts, it is a moral curse. During such a term of rule, the political life of the nation languishes, — its vital strength oozes away, — its able men lose much of their capability, — and the ideal of the people sinks from day to day. Their ideal of the statesman sinks to that of the clerk. Instead of principles and enterprises of progress, they learn to look for mere routine, or ingenuity in expedients. They are like the man who has lapsed from his ideal and purpose of self-perfection, and lets himself drift among the chances of life. Such, being the natural order of events, has been our experience. After the collapse of the Whigs, Sir R. Peel came in, to govern with power, skill, and the wisdom aptest for the time, — with realities for his materials, and the faculties within him, the reputation around him, and the fates above him, for his agents. But the most serious part of his work was that which he did not appoint to himself, and which he would no doubt have gladly avoided, — that of destroying the power amidst which he dwelt and acted by his own explosive force, — scattering his own vast party in fragments which could never re-unite. Upon this has followed the remaining disastrous consequence indicated above, — the intervention of a Ministry which could not have held office under the old existence of parties, and which cannot hold it under any parliamentary organization yet to succeed. It is necessary to look forward thus far, to understand what Sir R. Peel's position was when he met Parliament in February, 1842. He then knew no more of his own destiny than others knew. He did not then dream to what an extent he was to be the destroyer of parties by the act of being the achiever of a policy.

The necessity which ordained this destiny for him suspended the utter disintegration of parties, in order to give him all need-

ful provisional supports. There was the free-trade party, — strong and conspicuous, but necessarily only provisional, because the free-trade question is exhaustible. When trade is made free in all departments, there is an end. For the same reason, the Protectionist party is necessarily a temporary one. It is, from the moment its policy is broken in upon, a mere protesting party, advocating a negation or mere passiveness. The haymaker can protest against a thunder-shower only for a time. When the shower is over, there is no more room for protest. The most clear and serious and significant intimation of a present dissolution and future new constitution of parties arose from that operation of Sir Robert Peel's policy, which must, without leave asked of him or anybody else, abolish the old antagonism between the landed and commercial interests of our country. From the earliest days, these two interests have been supposed to be antagonistic by their very nature. We have seen how an opportunity was lost, at the time of municipal reform, of reconciling the two interests so far as to bring the rural districts under a government as good and free as that of the towns. We shall see, throughout this final period of our history, how incessantly and completely Parliament took it for granted that the landed and commercial interests always must be in opposition, because they always have been. But we shall also see something else. We shall see how the Anti-corn-law League demonstrated a unity of interests between the agricultural and manufacturing populations; and how the crowning measures of this period provide for their future union, and therefore for the abolition of those party distinctions which have, through our whole parliamentary history, been founded on their division. By the crowning acts of this period, provision is made for the application of science, skill, and economy, in the manufacture of food, just like that which takes place in the manufacture of clothing and utensils. By them provision is made for a vast increase in the stationary or dwindling agricultural population, — an increase which will be the natural consequence of an improved provision of work and demand for labor, as science and skill augment the productiveness and production of the soil. As this goes on, — as the increase of the agricultural population once more competes with that of the manufacturing, and thereby recovers something of its popular dignity; and as both populations see more and more that their interests are identical, and not opposite, — that they live under the same great natural laws of society, and flourish most as they are equally regarded by the parliamentary laws of Great Britain, — there must be less and less discussion of "the preponderance of the landed interest in

Free-traders
and protec-
tionists.

Approxima-
tion of agri-
cultural and
commercial
interests.

Parliament,"—at least in the House of Commons; less and less jealousy about class legislation; not only more equality before the law, but more unity under the policy of a future day. There will be then no place for political distinctions, on the ground of the opposition between the agricultural and commercial interests and, whatever may be the vital principles of parties in that day, they will certainly be something quite unconnected with the old antagonism which received its death-sentence in the repeal of the corn-laws.

A little party arose during this period which would, if it could, have protracted this antagonism, — both directly, Young England. by its agricultural predilections, and indirectly, by perpetuating a social state which had reached its term, or even reviving one which had passed away. No one could wonder, that, when the great "stream of tendency" was showing its full rapidity, there were many who, rather than trust themselves to it, put back into some little cove, not only to protest at leisure against the sweeping tide, but to gather together on the banks sticks and straws and meadow-garlands, to make and deck a weir. This was natural, and men did not wonder at it: but it could not be successful; and the "Young-England" party therefore did not enable the landed interest to retain its special protection and ancient prerogative for a single hour. The idea of the Young-England party, in regard to the condition of the people, was that all would be well if the ancient relation between the rich and the poor could be restored, — if the rich could, as formerly, take charge of the poor with a protecting benevolence, and the poor depend upon the rich in a spirit of trust and obedience. What the Tractarian priesthood were at this time requiring of their flocks, the "Young-England" politicians were striving for with the working-classes; and the spectacle was seen of Sunday sports encouraged, as in the old Catholic times; and popular festivals revived, at which young lords and members of Parliament pulled off their coats to play cricket with the laborers, or moved about among the crowd in the park or on the green, in the style of the feudal superior of old. This was amiable, and well intended; but it did not avail in the face of the stern truth that the great natural laws of society have dissolved the old relations between the endowed and the working-classes, and brought up a wholly new order of affairs. The landed proprietor is no longer the social parent of the population on his estates, — bound to supply them with a certain quantity of food and clothing, and empowered to command a certain amount of labor in return; and much less is the town capitalist responsible for the maintenance of his neighbors. The theory of society now is, that the laboring classes are as independent as any others;

that their labor is their own disposable property, by which they may make their subsistence in any way that they may think best. At the time we speak of, there were two obstacles in the way of the happy realization of this theory, neither of which was recognized by the Young-England gentry: one was, that bread and other ordinary provisions were taxed, and the supply of corn restricted by pernicious laws; the other was, that, owing to want of educational enlightenment and training on the part of the working-classes, they brought an undue number to share the wages of labor, so that most or all had too little; and thus their theoretical independence vanished under the pressure of actual want. We shall see how the first obstacle was removed during the period under notice; and we shall see how some attempts to advance the education of the people were frustrated about the same time. Meanwhile, nothing can be clearer than that the view of the Young-England party was fallacious, in as far as it proposed to improve substantially the condition of the people. It was beneficial and engaging to see the more educated take an interest in the advancement of the less educated, — to see men of pleasure brightening the rare holidays of the men of toil; but it was merely pernicious to hold out false hopes to the suffering, from an impracticable notion of restoring old conditions of protection and dependence, when the one essential thing that it is now necessary for the working-classes to understand is, that, food and labor being released from legal restriction, their condition is in their own hands. As truly as the Reformation took men from under the dictation of the priests, and gave every man's conscience into his own charge, had the growing-up of manufactures in our country taken the working-classes from under the no longer practicable protection of the landed and moneyed capitalists, and compelled them to protect themselves or perish. If they have enlightenment enough to see and rule their own destiny, they are raised to a condition far above that of the serf-like working-men of old. If they have not that enlightenment, they perish. In this critical period of the history of their class, they were deriving no effectual help from the Young-England party of their friends. As for the parliamentary action of the Young Englanders, it was in accordance with the hustings declaration of one of them, — Mr. Smythe, the member for Canterbury, — that the principles advocated by the "old Tory party" of a century back were still the soundest principles of government.¹

Serious as was the task of the Minister in every view, the most immediate sympathy was felt for him on account of the fearful state of the people. The distress had

The distress.

¹ Spectator, 1843, p. 680.

now so deepened in the manufacturing districts as to render it clearly inevitable that many must die, and a multitude be lowered to a state of sickness and irritability from want of food; while there seemed no chance of any member of the manufacturing classes coming out of the struggle at last with a vestige of property wherewith to begin the world again. The pressure had long extended beyond the interests first affected; and, when the new Ministry came into power, there seemed to be no class that was not threatened with ruin.¹ In Carlisle, the committee of inquiry reported that a fourth of the population was in a state bordering on starvation,—actually certain to die of famine, unless relieved by extraordinary exertions. In the woollen districts of Wiltshire, the allowance to the independent laborer was not two-thirds of the minimum in the workhouse; and the large existing population consumed only a fourth of the bread and meat required by the much smaller population of 1820.² In Stockport, more than half the master-spinners had failed before the close of 1842; dwelling-houses, to the number of 3000, were shut up; and the occupiers of many hundreds more were unable to pay rates at all.³ Five thousand persons were walking the streets in compulsory idleness; and the Burnley guardians wrote to the Secretary of State that the distress was far beyond their management; so that a government commissioner and government funds were sent down without delay. At a meeting at Manchester, where humble shopkeepers were the speakers, anecdotes were related which told more than declamation.⁴ Rent-collectors were afraid to meet their principals, as no money could be collected. Provision-dealers were subject to incursions from a wolfish man, prowling for food for his children; or from a half-frantic woman, with her dying baby at her breast; or from parties of ten or a dozen desperate wretches, who were levying contributions along the street. The linen-draper told how new clothes had become out of the question among his customers, and they bought only remnants and patches, to mend the old ones. The baker was more and more surprised at the number of people who bought half-pennyworths of bread. A provision-dealer used to throw away outside scraps of bacon; but now respectable customers of twenty years' standing bought them in pennyworths, to moisten their potatoes. These shopkeepers contemplated nothing but ruin, from the impoverished condition of their customers.⁵ While rates were increasing beyond all precedent, their trade was only one-half or one-third, or even one-tenth, what it had been three years before. In that neighborhood, a gentleman, who had retired from business in 1833, leaving

¹ Spectator, 1842, p. 27.

² Spectator, 1842, p. 32.

³ Spectator, 1842, p. 537.

⁴ Spectator, 1842, p. 555.

⁵ Spectator, 1842, p. 610.

a property worth 60,000*l.* to his sons, and who had, early in the distress, become security for them, was showing the works, for the benefit of the creditors, at a salary of 1*l.* a week. In families where the father had hitherto earned 2*l.* per week, and laid by a portion weekly, and where all was now gone but the sacks of shavings they slept on, exertions were made to get "blue milk" for the children to moisten their oatmeal with; but soon they could have it only on alternate days; and soon water must do. At Leeds, the pauper stone-heap amounted to 150,000 tons; and the guardians offered the paupers 6*s.* per week for doing nothing, rather than 7*s.* 6*d.* per week for stone-breaking.¹ The mill-wrights and other trades were offering a premium on emigration, to induce their "hands" to go away. At Hinckley, one-third of the inhabitants were paupers; more than a fifth of the houses stood empty; and there was not work enough in the place to employ properly one-third of the weavers. In Dorsetshire, a man and his wife had for wages 2*s.* 6*d.* per week, and three loaves; and the ablest laborers had 6*s.* or 7*s.* In Wiltshire, the poor peasants held open-air meetings after work, — which was necessarily after dark. There, by the light of one or two flaring tallow-candles, the man or the woman who had a story to tell stood on a chair, and related how their children were fed and clothed in old times, — poorly enough, but still so as to keep body and soul together; and now, how they could nohow manage to do it. The bare details of the ages of their children, and what the little things could do, and of the prices of bacon and bread, and calico and coals, had more pathos in them than any oratory heard elsewhere.

As for how this misery was borne, — it was, on the whole, endured with an incredible and inexplicable patience. The most comforting truth yielded by this dreadful trial was, that large numbers of the manufacturing class of laborers had learned thoroughly something that it much concerned them to know, — that there was no such thing in existence as an unlimited wages fund which was intercepted by the cruelty of capitalists. The great majority of Lancashire operatives showed, for instance, that they knew that their employers were sinking into ruin, and had nothing to give but out of their dwindling capital. But hunger is maddening, — not only by the bitter thoughts that it calls up, but by the actual irritation of the brain that it causes; and, among the hundreds and thousands of famishing men and women and children, some disorder and rebellion could not but arise. Owing to the incomparable management of the Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, the evil and danger were reduced to the smallest possible amount; but there was enough to keep the Ministry in

¹ Spectator, 1842, p. 657.

a state of perpetual anxiety, and to make the Queen's heart sink within her in the security of her palace. What the larger measures of the government were, we shall presently see. From the home-office, information the most extensive and accurate was gathered; aid was administered, where it could really avail, with the utmost quietness; preparation was made for the instant repression of violence where it was likely to arise; and the proper distinction was made between those who suffered the most severely and patiently, and those Chartists who were, at this time, very troublesome. They had got into the hands of Protectionist guides or agents, and broke in upon free-trade meetings, and denounced free-trade in corn, and stirred up precisely those among the working-classes who were suffering least,—the pit-men of the coal districts, and the Welsh miners. There were

riots of nailers and miners at Dudley and Stourbridge, and tumult over the whole district, requiring the active services of the military. The rioters resisted a reduction of wages, and hustled some of the masters; as did other rioters in Wales, where a gentleman of property had a narrow escape with his life. In the Potteries, a force of 6000 malecontents, spread over an extent of seven miles, and occasionally committing violence on recusant masters or men, kept Staffordshire in alarm. Troops were encamped on the Pottery race-course, and magistrates tried to conciliate and mediate; but with little effect.¹ In Manchester, the influx of malecontents became alarming in August, 1842. Mills were stopped, and, in some, the windows broken, and machinery injured. The Riot Act was read four times in one day, and prisoners were taken by scores at once. A large attendance of military was necessary, as there were threats of tearing up the railways, and cutting the gas-pipes. At one time, all the chief manufacturing towns in the district seemed to be in the hands of the mob. Presently a royal proclamation came from London, and troops from London and from Ireland; and then it appeared that Chartists from a distance were at the bottom of the disturbances. It was well understood afterwards that these risings were a great affliction to the best informed of the suffering operatives, who were aware that their misery had no immediately political origin, and could not be remedied by political movements.

The rioters sent bodies of their men to the Yorkshire towns; and sometimes letters, — laconic and significant, — detailing progress, and one ending with, "We get plenty to eat; the shops are open; they give us what we want." Some disturbances ensued; but nothing so formidable as in Lancashire and in the Potteries, where now the malecontents were gutting and burning dwelling-

¹ Spectator, 1842, p. 779.

houses. In the midst of their violence, they gave a lame clergyman "ten minutes' law" to walk away, but refused the entreaties of a lady that they would spare the house, leaving her to be thankful for personal safety.¹ Three men were shot dead by the soldiery at Burslem, and several wounded. Lady Peel was assured, by an anonymous correspondent, that Drayton Manor would be burned down. A guard was procured; but no attack was made.² A clergyman at Leeds was warned by approaching rioters that they meant to sleep in his church on a certain night; he intimated his intention of preaching to them all night, and they did not appear. In a very short time, the Chartist strangers—men whom nobody knew dropping in from a distance—showed a depth of design and an extent of rapacity which disgusted the Lancashire operatives; and the disorder subsided gradually through the last weeks of August and the beginning of September.³

To these succeeded the strangest series of riots that has occurred in our time. This was a season for teaching the mischievous lesson, that insurrectionary violence would obtain redress of grievances to which no other method of complaint could draw attention. Urgent complaints had long been made by the inhabitants of the rural districts of Wales of their road-taxes. After having paid rates, they had again to pay heavy tolls on the by-roads,—so heavy as sometimes to absorb the profit of the small produce the humble farmers were carrying to market, and to make their manure more costly than it was worth. In 1839, a particularly unpopular set of gates, which the people believed to be illegally erected, were pulled down, on the borders of Caermarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. The magistrates declared their intention of overruling the trustees about the re-erection of these gates; some of them became trustees for the purpose, and the gates were never put up again. This victory dwelt on the minds of the rude and primitive people of the district, who had notions of their own, knew little of the world outside, and spoke nothing but Welsh. They held meetings in by-corners or remote places of their wild district, and organized their remarkable conspiracy. They resolved to destroy all gates and toll-houses that they considered objectionable, and to persist till the trustees could not afford to put up any more. Their first enterprise had been a sort of frolic,—the gates having been pulled down in open day by a mob with uncovered faces. They would be more serious and cautious henceforth. Out of the many texts of Scripture which mention a gate,—the oriental gate, whose significance was not dreamed

Rebecca
and her
children.

¹ Spectator, 1842, p. 800.

² Morning Chronicle, August, 1842.

³ Morning Post, August, 1842.

of by these simple Welshmen,—they chose Gen. xxiv. 60: “And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.”¹ They chose a chief, dressed him in woman’s clothes, put a large disguising-bonnet on his head, and named him Rebecca, calling his followers Rebecca’s daughters. The Rebecca, stalking about in petticoats, or riding astride with streaming cloak or shawl, was so ubiquitous, that there could be little doubt of the name being given to any leader of an expedition against the gates. In the winter of 1842 and 1843, Rebecca and her daughters began their work; and that winter will never be forgotten while tradition endures in Wales.² By day, all was quiet enough. The most vigilant of the constabulary could see nothing but the ordinary sights of the roads and fields,—no groups in consultation, no mysterious looks,—nothing but jogging riders who duly paid their tolls, and people about their proper business in their fields or their home. If there was a suspicion of an intended attack on any particular gate, that gate was sure to be left in peace; and, while it was watched, half a dozen were levelled at some opposite point of the country,—in one case, within a quarter of a mile of the assembled magistrates. If the toll-keepers looked out apprehensively, they were sure not to see any approaching light or other token. If they went outside to listen, nobody came near. But, when they were forgetful or asleep, they were roused by the blare of a multitude of cow-horns, and the popping of a dozen guns; their door was burst open, and they saw a crowd, some on horses, and some on foot,—some in women’s clothes, and others with veiled faces,—with the flaring torches, and the glittering saws and hatchets. The toll-takers must move out their furniture or lose it; and strong hands helped to carry bed and table and utensils into the field or the dry ditch, while others were sawing off the gate-posts close to the ground, and chopping up the gate. Then off came the roof of the toll-house, and down came the walls, and up came the flags of the very floor; the road was made clear for passengers; and then the uncouth creatures leaped on their horses again, hallooed, blew their horns, fired their guns, and galloped off to some distant point, which they would approach in dead stillness, as in this case. The toll-taker and his wife usually found themselves left alone under the stars in a very few minutes after their first start in bed, or by their warm fireside. Latterly, it was usual for the soldiers to come galloping up as soon as Rebecca and her children were completely out of sight and hearing. After an instant’s pause, to learn which way the rioters were gone, the soldiers would be off at full speed, arriving perhaps to find another toll-keeper and his wife under the stars, and

¹ Times Reporter, June, 1843.

² Annual Register, 1843, p. 208.

Rebecca just out of sight again. Or, more probably, they missed their way; for the peasantry competed with each other in misdirecting the dragoons. Thus, in the county of Caermarthen, nearly eighty gates were destroyed; and in Pembrokeshire and Cardiganshire few remained. Those few were the old-established gates, which were not meddled with. Those which were most zealously destroyed were the new gates put up on by-roads leading to lime-kilns. The small farmers burned their own lime for manure; and, since the new contractors for the tolls had insisted on putting up gates on the way to the kilns, the farmers had to pay 1s. for their load of stone, another for their load of coal, and again another for their lime when they brought it away from the kiln.¹ Their little farming could not be made to answer in this way. For some time this seemed to be all, and probably was all, that was comprehended in the movement.

But, when risings were taking place elsewhere, Chartist agitators went into South Wales to see whether they could not make comrades of Rebecca and her children. The ^{Chartist} intervention. aspect of the movement presently changed. The police were surrounded and disarmed, and, in one case, marched to a magistrate's house, and compelled to pull down a wall. Threatening letters were distributed, declaring that Rebecca meant to abolish justice-fees and tithes, and to pull down the work-houses, and to compel a reduction of rents. The alarmed and perplexed magistrates besought aid from government; and a strong body of troops, and another of police, were sent down. But both troops and police were baffled at every turn. Magistrates' houses were fired into; and Caermarthen work-house was half destroyed, precisely according to previous threats. The mob marched into town to the number of some thousands, the flaunting Rebecca being conspicuous among them. Among the insignia carried were brooms, wherewith to sweep the foundations of the work-houses and toll-houses. The mob had burst the gates, and were gutting the house, — the governor clanging the alarm-bell, — when the soldiers arrived; two of their horses dropping dead from fatigue.² Several hundreds of the rioters were captured, and a few slightly wounded. From the time that the Chartist emissaries directed Rebecca's movements, nothing went well with her. At the meetings in the hollows of the hills, the Chartist-Toryism came out. One speaker denounced the poor-law, saying it was the proper fruit of the foolish and mischievous Reform Bill; and here, as everywhere else, the Tory-Chartists opposed free-trade, and announced the ruin of all farmers if the corn-laws were repealed. All now went wrong. One night Rebecca's horse was shot, and her gun was wrested out of her hand. She galloped

¹ Times Reporter, June, 1843.

² Spectator, 1843, p. 583.

100 yards, when her horse fell dead, and, in the darkness of the night, she escaped; but at last two of her "children" were captured in the act of assaulting a toll-house. They were young farm-laborers. The gate was on this occasion saved. This was on the 24th of August. On the 6th of September, Rebecca's horse was again shot,—after the destruction of the gate,—and six of her followers captured, two of whom were severely wounded. Before the month was out, incendiarism began. A band of armed and disguised men went from farm to farm of an active magistrate, and burned his stacks,—being lighted across the fields by the fires they had kindled behind them.¹ Another magistrate, coming home at night, found his stacks burning, the wood full of armed men, and the plugs of his fish-ponds drawn, so that no water could be had. Next came

Murder. There was a time in the movement when

Rebecca was genial, with some little mirth in her mood, and much kindness. In the spring she had let a toll-house stand, because there was a sick child within. Now, in the autumn, she was grown diabolical,—so diabolical that men lost their manhood under the dread of her enmity. An old woman, above seventy, kept a gate which she knew to be doomed. She had been warned to leave it; and at three in the morning, one Sunday, she was awakened by the burning of her thatch. She ran to a cottage near to ask the stout fellow who lived there to come and put out the fire: "There was not much," she said. He dared not put his head out, but asked her in. She ran back to save her furniture. Rebecca's children came up, and fired the thatch again. The old creature called out that she knew them; and they shot her dead. What followed made some people talk of leaving the country, and others of the advantage of martial law. The coroner's jury, privately owning themselves afraid to do their duty, returned a verdict: "That the deceased died from the effusion of blood into the chest, which occasioned suffocation; but from what cause is to this jury unknown."²

This was not to be borne. A royal proclamation called on all men to do their duty. A special commission was sent down to try the prisoners; and, better than either of these, another commission was appointed to inquire into the grievances of the malecontents. Both commissions were conducted in the best spirit. The addresses of the judge, Baron Gurney, are like the admonitory rebukes of a parent to children hard driven into fault; and, indeed, there was pity in all minds towards the culprits,—the opinion of the other commission already getting known,—that poverty and hardship were at the bottom of the Rebecca riots. Three men sentenced to transport-

¹ Spectator, 1843, pp. 869, 875.

² Annual Register, 1843, p. 262.

ation issued a penitent admonitory address to their countrymen ; and their relations and intimate friends offered themselves for special constables. The light sentences of imprisonment on others of the rioters, and the discharge without trial of many more, were believed to be owing, not only to many pleading guilty, but to an understanding that the peace was to be kept henceforth.¹

The commission of inquiry held sittings from place to place ; and everywhere the inhabitants showed themselves eager to state their grievances. The conclusions of the commissioners were, that the hardships under the existing turnpike-system were real and intolerable ; and that the outbreak was immediately occasioned by their pressure on the farmers, who were already in difficulties from a succession of bad harvests. From other causes, there was more hardship than usual, — the long-continued distress having extended its effects into the remotest corners of the principality. In the next session of Parliament, a Bill, framed on the report of the commissioners, passed both Houses without controversy ; the leading principle of which was the consolidation of turnpike trusts in South Wales.² The constitution of the new executive board, and the arrangements for clearing off the debts under the old system, were everywhere approved ; and Rebecca's insurrection ended in complete success as to its original objects. While all minds were soothed and pleased by the fine temper shown in the trials, all felt that the utmost leniency was absolutely indispensable, while the government commissioners were discovering the grievances of the people to be real and intolerable, and to have been complained of in vain for many years.

Of the excited state of Scotland during this period of dread and disorder, some account must be given hereafter. And also of Ireland, where O'Connell was triumphing and boasting the more offensively, the more distress and disaster spread in England and Wales. He avowed the "sentiment," that "England's adversity is Ireland's opportunity." Opportunity for what? was the question asked by a multitude ; but a larger multitude on Irish ground did not think of asking the question. If the demand of O'Connell and Ireland had been for any definable reform or measure or grant, long asked and denied, the declaration might have been excusable, like the action of Rebecca and her children. But it was not so ; and a subsequent chapter will show the full iniquity of O'Connell's present proceedings, and of the motto which he caused to be heard in the drawing-rooms at Windsor Castle, and under the thatch of the meanest Irish cabin.

¹ Spectator, 1843, p. 1036.

² Hansard, lxxvi. p. 1944.

And how was it at Windsor and in London during this dreary and tedious season of adversity? When the distress set in, the queen and her court were engaged in a perpetual round of gayeties. Some newspapers, which had a wide circulation among the working-classes, now began the practice of printing in parallel columns the descriptions of fancy dresses at the Queen's balls, and accounts of royal purchases, banquets, and pleasures, on the one hand; and the coroner's inquests on starved persons, reports from the distressed districts, returns of mortality, and the like, on the other. The device wrought powerfully; and some portentous symptoms of a new royal unpopularity appeared. It is believed that Sir R. Peel did the duty of a faithful Minister; not rousing or augmenting the fears of the Queen, but giving the counsel which the time required. In the midst of magnificent preparations for the christening of the Prince of Wales, it is believed that the Minister gave the advice to make haste, and to retrench. The King of Prussia presently arrived; the Queen and Court appeared in Paisley and other home manufactures; and, as soon as the christening was over, a comparative sobriety settled down over the Court, and not even the most querulous had any future cause to blame the amount or the nature of the royal expenditure.

In such times it is — if they last long enough to wear our faith and patience — that we see most curiously revealed

Alarms.

the "fears of the brave and follies of the wise." Accidents always intervene to aggravate the fear; and the undue fear perverts the wisdom of the wisest. It was during this season that two of the pistol-shots which have been mentioned before were fired at the Queen. Both were pranks of ignorant and foolish youths, and appear to have had no immediate connection with the discontents of the time. But they went to enhance the impression of dread; and it was understood that the ladies of the Court — and perhaps not only the ladies — were living in a painful state of apprehension of coming evils. While all was gloomiest, in January, 1843, an event happened which might almost justify any increase of panic. Sir R. Peel's private secretary, Mr. Edward Drummond, was shot in the street,

Murder of
Mr. Drum-
mond.

and died of the wound. It was at first supposed that he was mistaken for the Premier; and, in a season such as this, which was manifestly unsettling weak wits, it was some time before Sir R. Peel was considered safe. Two policemen in plain clothes followed him in the streets; and the newspapers, which were all aware of the fact, considerably forbore — all but one — to notice the fact. Mr. Drummond's murderer, however, was proved a lunatic, and lodged for life in an asylum. Yet there was mischief in the occurrence. Drunken men were heard

to threaten the Queen and the Minister; and infirm brains began to work in that direction, as we see by the police reports of the time.

Something worse than the "fears of the brave" were "the follies of the wise." Grave statesmen, honorable gentlemen, benevolent Christians, began to conceive of conduct in their adversaries, and to utter imputations, which could never have come into their heads at an ordinary time. The Anti-corn-law League had not yet had time to win the respect and command the deference which it was soon to enjoy; but it was known to be organized and led by men of station, character, and substance, — men of enlarged education, and of that virtuous and decorous conduct which distinguishes the middle class of England. Yet it was believed — believed by men of education, by men in Parliament, by men in attendance on the government — that the Anti-corn-law League sanctioned assassination, and did not object to carry its aims by means of it. This is, perhaps, the strongest manifestation of the tribulation of the time. In the midst of it, a strange and mournful scene took place in the House of Commons, — a scene which would willingly be forgotten, but that the spirit of history must forget nothing which indicates or affects the course of events. Sir R. Peel was ill, harassed with public anxieties, and deeply wounded in his private feelings, by the murder of his secretary, who was also his intimate friend. Mr. Cobden was then little known — at least, by his opponents. He was known as the chief man of the League; and the League was believed to patronize assassination. In the heat of debate, at two hours past midnight of the 17th of February, the Premier charged Mr. Cobden with exposing him to fatal consequences, by declaring him "personally responsible" for the misery of the people. Mr. Cobden was so confounded by the outrageous charge, and so borne down by the passionate and insulting clamor of the majority of the House, that he could not do himself justice. Some years afterwards, the two great men came to an understanding, and did themselves and one another justice. But that such an incident could have occurred, shows that it was no time for judging the greatest men too strictly. If it was a time when a gaunt workman might be lightly dealt with for snatching a loaf, and a Welsh peasant for sawing off a gate-post, it was also one which bespoke consideration for perplexed and anxious statesmen.

Such was the period that was setting in, — such were the storms that were driving up, — when the Peel ministry had to come forward with measures of relief for the finances of the country.

CHAPTER VI.

THE new administration insisted, as we have seen, on taking the recess for the consideration of the financial affairs of the nation, instead of declaring their policy within a month, as the ex-ministers would have taunted them into doing. The present ministers were men of business, disposed and able to make their measures thorough and complete of their kind,—fit to be offered to Parliament,—fit to pass through Parliament,—fit to work in practice afterwards; and the interval between September and February was short enough for the preparation of such a group of measures as was now to be set up against the debts and distresses of the country. There was much speculation and conjecture as to the purposes of ministers during this interval; but ministers were profoundly secret, and none were further from anticipating what was coming than the heads of the Whig party. At a dinner in London, in November, where all the guests but two were personal friends and adherents of the late ministers, one of the two, who was not a party-man at all, was asked what he supposed Peel and Goulburn would do. The reply was: “Why, Peel has told you two things, which, put together, show you what he means to do. He says he is not going to repeal the corn-laws; and he says he will put an end to our sinking into debt. Therefore, he must be going to lay on an income-tax.” The uproar of ridicule was loud; and the guest was told on all hands that he was talking nonsense, and that he little knew Peel if he supposed him to have the “courage” to lay on an income-tax. His answer was: “You asked my opinion, and you have it. Time will show if I am wrong.” It seems surprising now that so few should have anticipated a positive policy,—a set of broad measures, which should be at once remedial and progressive; but too many minds had become weak and superficial about political affairs, under the incapable rule of the Whigs; and those who went into society found little but a vague expectation of some relief from shiftings and changes under the heads of the debt, and some putting on and taking off among the taxes. Meantime, nothing occurred in the way of dis-

closure till January, — a short time before Parliament met, when the Duke of Buckingham seceded from the ministry. This was understood as a sign that something was going to be done with the corn-laws that the Duke of Buckingham did not like. The farmers were uneasy. The Whigs were delighted, — hoping that there was already a division in the Cabinet. The speech was eagerly listened to, at the opening of Parliament on the 3d of February. The numbers who thronged the House of Lords were unusually great, because of the new interest which surrounded the Queen after the recent birth of the Prince of Wales, and because the King of Prussia was present, and the ceremony was conducted with unusual splendor; but there was more eagerness still to hear how the appalling distresses of the country would be noticed, and our financial difficulties be met.

In the speech, the recognition of the distress was emphatic; and so was that of “the exemplary patience and fortitude” of the sufferers.¹ The evil of the annual deficit, The Queen's speech. now become so familiar, was pointed out as one which must immediately be put an end to; and the tone of decision about this showed that some practical method of recovery was about to be proposed. Parliament was also requested to attend to the laws affecting the importation of corn, and of other articles of foreign production. What “other articles?” people asked each other, and how many of them? Was there to be an extension of free-trade? Could any considerable sacrifice of import-duties be contemplated at a time when the first consideration was how to deal with our annual deficit? The debate on the address did not detain men long from the answers to these questions. There was a seriousness and business-like character about the speech, and the demeanor of ministers in meeting Parliament, which rebuked captiousness, and put a check upon waste of time in party recrimination. The Whig leaders were more amiable than they had been in the autumn; and some taunting observations from Lord John Russell, easily answered, and a curious piece of abuse of the sliding-scale from Lord Melbourne, — as free and easy as if he had never deprecated attacks upon it, — were the only hostile manifestations on the part of the Whigs.² The address echoed the speech, and passed quickly. The Premier gave notice that the budget would be brought forward early. Ministers were ready with it now; but they thought it due to the country to go into the corn question first, with which their remaining measures would be connected, as speedily as possible. The corn question was to come on on the next Wednesday, February 9.

¹ Hansard, lx. p. 4.

² Hansard, lx. pp. 58, 20.

All that day, the avenues to the House were thronged; and, the moment the doors were opened, there was a rush which filled the strangers' gallery. As the Horse Guard's clock struck four, the head of a remarkable procession appeared from the Strand. Six hundred anti-corn-law delegates were marching down to the House, where they demanded admission to the lobby, and were refused, on the ground of the obstruction that would thus be caused to the entrance of members. While the members were entering, therefore, the strangers lined the way in Palace-yard, and greeted each member as he passed with a hint or exhortation about the repeal of the corn-laws. They felt their full importance; and it was really great. Already, since the meeting of Parliament, 994 petitions for the repeal of the corn-laws had been presented; and these delegates were the representatives of some millions of the Queen's best subjects.¹ When they had duly impressed themselves on the passing members, they marched back again up Parliament Street; and, at Privy Gardens, they met Sir R. Peel in his carriage, on his way to the House. He looked very grave, and his countenance did not relax when he heard the cries all round him for the downfall of the bread-tax. This was an anxious day for the minister, — the last great occasion of his speaking from a false position, — from too dubious and unsatisfied a mind within, to enable him cheerfully to brave unpopularity without.

He rose to speak about five o'clock. The Duke of Cambridge and many other peers were present, and the House was crowded throughout, and yet particularly still, till towards the close of the speech, when the Minister had to ask for the attention of his hearers. There was no confidence in his manner; it was nervous and uneasy.² There was no argument in his speech; it was mainly one of clear exposition of the government proposals, and vague deprecation of "reliance on foreigners" for the food of the nation. He even condescended to the statement that in ordinary years the nation had enough, or nearly enough, of home-grown corn for its consumption, and that it was therefore only on extraordinary occasions that we need to resort to foreigners for any considerable quantity of food.³ In a little while, he was to see, as clearly as any man, that it was not for him or any one to say when the people had enough, or how long our annual produce would serve our increasing numbers; and that the occasional character of our demand for foreign corn was precisely that which made the commerce an evil instead of a good. But now his mind was entering upon its final transition stage, — something of the bitterness of which he had known before. The joy of the agricultural party at finding that they were not to be

¹ Spectator, 1842, p. 151. ² Spectator, 1842, p. 145. ³ Hansard, lx. p. 214.

bereft of their sliding-scale, could give him no pleasure in the present state of his mind. The derisive cheers of the opposition were clamorous when it appeared that nothing more was proposed than a reduction of duty, and to make the sliding-scale really slide instead of jumping; and the Whigs were delighted to find that the minister had failed to come up to their own point,—of an 8s. fixed duty. Their cheers were caught up by the anti-corn-law crowd without; and the Minister, supposed to be the strongest since the peace, found himself almost overwhelmed on the announcement of the first of his schemes.

The ministerial plan proposed to preserve the principle of the corn-duty varying inversely with the price of corn in the market; and the existing system of averages was ^{The Corn Bill of 1842.} to be retained,—if for no other reason, because it was the basis of the recent tithe commutation scheme.¹ But some security was provided by changes in the mode and instrumentality of procuring the averages, and yet more by extending the area from which the averages were to be derived. Instead of the 150 towns named in the Corn Bill, many of which were insignificant in comparison with new towns that had risen up, every considerable town which had a corn-market was to be named in the new act, to contribute to the averages. As for the main point,—the reduction of duties,—much fraud and other evil had been found to arise from the suddenness of the reduction of duty when corn was at the dearest. Thus, when wheat was at 70s., the duty was 13s. 8d.; and it fell to 10s. 8d. when wheat was only 1s. dearer. Yet worse, when wheat was again 1s. dearer, the duty sank 4s., so as to be 6s. 8d. at 72s., and 2s. 8d. at 73s.; and above that, only 1s. The inducement to corn-merchants to hold back corn, in order to enhance its price, and escape all but the lightest duties, was thus very strong; and the injury was great to the government, which lost much duty; to the home-grower, by causing an over-supply in the market precisely when prices reached their highest point; and, above all, to the consumer, who had to pay the high prices thus artificially caused. This was the evil to be redressed. In coming to the mode of redress, Sir R. Peel made the agricultural faces in the House very grave by saying that he did not believe it to be for the interest of the farmer that prices should reach higher than the range from 54s. to 58s. The manufacturing interest were not surprised at his seeing no good in prices being lower than that range; and he made both classes understand that he was as far as possible from supposing that the price of home-grown corn could be fixed, or even indicated, by any thing that could be done in Parliament. This being understood, it was now proposed that the duty should

¹ Hansard, lx. p. 218-229.

never exceed 20s., and that this duty should remain till the price of wheat passed 50s. When it was 51s., the duty was to be 19s. Then it was to be 18s., while the price mounted through 3s., — that is, till wheat was at 55s. when the duty would be 17s. This “rest” in the slide was to be repeated when the price was 66s., and the duty 6s. The price must be 69s. before the duty sank to 5s. Such was the scheme, proposing a very considerable reduction of duties, and of “protection” to the home-grower; but somewhat easing the reduction by amending in his favor the action of the scale. It was in itself no great matter: it did not touch the vices of the system, or introduce any remedial principle; but it told plainly enough, to all that had ears to hear, that the corn-laws were doomed. The dubious countenances of land-

owners in both Houses said so. The shakes of the head at market-tables said so. The embarrassed bearing of the Minister said so to those who saw his position and his course more clearly than he did himself. The cheers of the delegates outside the House, before assembling to concert new measures of agitation, said so; and, as for the newspapers, some of them said so very plainly.

It was the 7th of April before the Bill passed the Commons; and great was the excitement in the interval. The farmers were at first disposed to be as angry as the manufacturers; but they were advised by their friends in both Houses to be quiet, as it was certain that they could get nothing better than this Bill by opposition, and they might get something worse. The League called meetings in London, and all the large provincial towns, where the imposition of any tax whatever on food was denounced, and declared to be doomed to extinction. At these meetings, Lord John Russell's proposed policy made no progress. A fixed duty was scouted as emphatically as any movable duty. In some manufacturing towns, Sir R. Peel was burned in effigy.¹ He had gratified nobody, satisfied very few, and offended a vast majority of the nation; so he might well look grave by anticipation, when he met the delegates by his own gate as he was going down to the House.

The first thing the House did was to sanction the principle of the sliding-scale by rejecting Lord John Russell's Amendment rejected. resolution against it, by a majority of 123 in a House of 575 members, after a debate of four nights. Yet Mr. Villiers brought forward his promised motion against any corn-duty whatever; and this was debated for five nights more, and lost by a majority of 393 to 90.² A scale of duties proposed by Mr. Christopher, as superior to the ministerial one, was rejected in committee by a majority of 306 to 104.³ Lord Ebrington op-

¹ Annual Register, 1842, p. 53.

² Hansard, lx. p. 620.

³ Hansard, lx. pp. 1082, 1168.

posed the second reading on the 8th of March, but was outvoted by a large majority. The debates had now become languid and wearisome. Everybody knew what would be said on all hands, and that the Bill could not but pass, after the rejection of Lord John Russell's resolution; and it was a universal relief when the Corn Bill of 1842—the last defiance of the great natural laws of society in the shape of a sliding-scale of food-duties—was sent up to the other House.

There Lord Melbourne followed the course of Lord John Russell in the Commons,—but in his own characteristic manner.¹ He declared that all sound argument, all good sense, all clear reason, all the well-understood interests of mankind, were on the side of free-trade; but that all usage, all prejudices, and nearly all feelings, were in favor of protective duties. He therefore dissented from Lord Brougham's proposed resolutions in favor of a perfectly free trade in corn, and moved a declaration in favor of a fixed duty on its importation. This was negatived by a majority of 117 to 49; and Lord Brougham's, in a ^{Bill becomes} thin House, by 87 to 6. Lord Stanhope, on the other, ^{law.} the ultra-Protectionist side, would have had the Bill read that day six months; but the day of his party was over, and the Bill became law on the 29th of April.²

In the mean time, the all-important statement had been made, —the statement of the measures by which ministers proposed to retrieve the financial affairs of the nation, to arrest its course into annually deepening debt, and give a new and healthy stimulus to manufactures and commerce. The statement ^{Financial} took the House and the people by surprise,—not after ^{statement.} the manner which had become a Whig device, but by the breadth and comprehensiveness of the measures proposed. It was remembered that measures proposed by a Peel Cabinet were always fit to be carried, as far as their preparation was concerned: so that, if passed at all, they would be passed complete; and men saw their whole prospect when the ministerial proposals were laid before them. It is seldom that so wide and new a prospect is opened before a people as on the present occasion; and it was indeed time that the most vigorous and effectual efforts were made for the redemption of our sinking State. It was at this date that it became clear that the Chinese war was not over; and our deadly misfortunes in India were beginning to open upon minds at home. Though the East-India Company bore the expenses of wars which concerned their own territory, it was impossible to say what might not be the drain upon the national treasury in consequence of the Afghan enterprise.

We have seen something of the daily deepening distress and

¹ Hansard, lxii. pp. 75, 722.

² Hansard, lxii. pp. 804, 1234.

trouble throughout our own islands; and, of all disheartening things, the Minister had to begin his government under a certain deficiency of two millions and a half for the year, and upwards of ten millions for the last six years.¹ The excuse of the Whigs for leaving affairs in this condition was, that they could not help it. They declared, that, from this consideration, and a principle of religious submission to misfortunes sent by Providence, their minds were calm and their consciences clear. Such was their declaration. It is well for the British nation that Sir R. Peel's was somewhat different,—in spirit as in terms. Which was the nobler, the more religious, and the more benevolent, the event soon showed. Sir R. Peel's declaration was as follows; and it aided his after-work, by spreading stimulus and hope over the country, and rousing the best spirit of the nation. On the 11th of March it was, that, before opening his scheme, he intimated the spirit in which it was prepared.²

"No one," he said, "can feel more than I do the importance and the extent of the duty that devolves on me. No one can be more conscious than I am how disproportionate are my intellectual powers to the proper performance of my task; but, sir, I should be unworthy of the trust committed to me—I should be unfit to stand here in my place as the Minister of the British Crown—if I could feel disheartened or discouraged; if I could entertain any thing but composure and contentedness of mind,—any thing, I may say, but that buoyancy and alacrity of spirit which ought to sustain every public man when entering upon the discharge of a great public duty; conscious that he is actuated by no motives that are not honorable and just, and feeling a deep and intimate conviction, that, according to the best conclusion of his imperfect and fallible judgment, that which he intends to propose will be conducive to the welfare, I may say essential to the prosperity, of the country." So much for his own state of mind. As for that which he confidently anticipated from the nation, his own intimation of what it ought to be, at the conclusion of his speech, was enough to call it into life, if it was not already existing. No History of the Forty Years' Peace would be complete, which did not embody the views of the patriotism of peace, in analogy with that of war, which were this night offered, amidst the deep silence of a listening Parliament, by the first Minister of the Crown:³—

"I have given you," said R. Peel, "a full, an explicit, an unreserved, but, I hope, an unexaggerated statement of the financial embarrassments in which we are placed. There are occasions when a Minister of the Crown may, consistently with honor and with good policy, pause before he presses upon the Legislature the adoption of measures which he believes to be

¹ Hansard, lxi. p. 430. ² Hansard, lxi. p. 423. ³ Hansard, lxi. pp. 464–466.

abstractedly right. . . . But there are occasions, and this is one of them, upon which a government can make no compromise; there are occasions, and this is one of them, upon which it is the bounden duty of a government to give that counsel to the Legislature which it believes to be right,—to undertake the responsibility of proposing those measures which it believes to be for the public advantage, and to devolve upon the Legislature the responsibility of adopting or rejecting those measures. I have performed, on the part of Her Majesty's government, my duty. I have proposed, with the full weight and authority of the government, that which I believe to be conducive to the public welfare. I now devolve upon you the duty, which properly belongs to you, of maturely considering, and finally deciding on, the adoption or rejection of the measures I propose. We live in an important era of human affairs. There may be a natural tendency to overrate the magnitude of the crisis in which we live, or those particular events with which we are ourselves conversant; but I think it is impossible to deny, that the period in which our lot and the lot of our fathers has been cast—the period which has elapsed since the first outbreak of the first French Revolution—has been one of the most memorable periods that the history of the world will afford. The course which England has pursued during that period will attract for ages to come the contemplation, and, I trust, the admiration, of posterity. That period may be divided into two parts of almost equal duration: a period of twenty-five years of continued conflict,—the most momentous which ever engaged the energies of a nation; and twenty-five years, in which most of us have lived, of profound European peace, produced by the sacrifices made during the years of war. There will be a time when those countless millions that are sprung from our loins, occupying many parts of the globe, living under institutions derived from ours, speaking the same language in which we convey our thoughts and feelings,—for such will be the ultimate results of our wide-spread colonization,—the time will come when those countless millions will view with pride and admiration the example of constancy and fortitude which our fathers set during the momentous period of war. They will view with admiration our previous achievements by land and sea, our determination to uphold the public credit, and all those qualities by the exhibition of which we were enabled ultimately, by the example we set to foreign nations, to insure the deliverance of Europe. In the review of the period, the conduct of our fathers during the years of war will be brought into close contrast with the conduct of those of us who have lived only during the years of peace. I am now addressing you after the duration of peace for twenty-five

years. I am now exhibiting to you the financial difficulties and embarrassments in which you are placed; and my confident hope and belief is, that, following the example of those who preceded you, you will look those difficulties in the face, and not refuse to make similar sacrifices to those which your fathers made for the purpose of upholding public credit. You will bear in mind that this is no casual and occasional difficulty. You will bear in mind that there are indications among all the upper classes of society of increased comfort and enjoyment, of increased prosperity and wealth; and that, concurrently with these indications, there exists a mighty evil which has been growing up for the last seven years, and which you are now called upon to meet. If you have, as I believe you have, the fortitude and constancy of which you have been set the example, you will not consent with folded arms to view the annual growth of this mighty evil. You will not reconcile it to your consciences to hope for relief from diminished taxation. You will not adopt the miserable expedient of adding, during peace, and in the midst of those indications of wealth and of increasing prosperity, to the burdens which posterity will be called upon to bear. You will not permit this evil to gain such gigantic growth as ultimately to place it far beyond your power to check or control. If you do permit this evil to continue, you must expect the severe but just judgment of a reflecting and retrospective posterity. Your conduct will be contrasted with the conduct of your fathers, under difficulties infinitely less pressing than theirs. Your conduct will be contrasted with that of your fathers, who, with a mutiny at the Nore, a rebellion in Ireland, and disaster abroad, yet submitted with buoyant vigor and universal applause — with the funds as low as 52 — to a property-tax of 10 per cent. I believe that you will not subject yourselves to an injurious or unworthy contrast. It is my firm belief, that you will feel the necessity of preserving inviolate the public credit; that you will not throw away the means of maintaining the public credit by reducing in the most legitimate manner the burden of the public debt. My confident hope and belief is, that now, when I devolve the responsibility upon you, you will prove yourselves worthy of your mission, — of your mission as the representatives of a mighty people; and that you will not tarnish the fame which it is your duty to cherish as the most glorious inheritance; that you will not impair the character for fortitude, for good faith, which, in proportion as the empire of opinion supersedes and predominates over the empire of physical force, constitutes for every people, but above all for the people of England, — I speak of reputation and character, — the main instrument by which a powerful people can repel hostile aggressions and maintain extended empire."

The Minister continued to do his own part, by a bearing of unflinching firmness and patient courage. On the night of the 11th of March, while the House was waiting for his statement, he had had the painful duty of communicating to it the news of the murder of Sir William M^cNaghten, and of the calamities of the Cabool force; and, for many nights afterwards, his attendance in the House was a sort of running the gantlet of inquiries and objections about his scheme, which was too large to be at once comprehended, and too vigorous to be at once estimated by the existing House of Commons.

The scheme was this. Here was a large deficiency to be met, and such a surplus to be provided as would prevent the recurrence of a deficiency. It was too great a ^{Financial} scheme. ^{scheme.} It needed to be met by a tax on a commodity here and a commodity there, at a time when too many commodities were going out of use through the poverty of the people. The appeal must be made directly to property; and the first proposition was of an income-tax, not to exceed 7*d.* in the pound, or nearly ^{Income-tax.} 3 per cent, for a limited period. Such a tax, besides filling up the deficit, would yield a surplus that would justify a vast reduction of commercial taxation; and the confident expectation of the Minister was, that so much relief would be felt from these reductions, — from the improvement in trade and in comfort that must follow, — that the payment of the income-tax would be rendered very easy. He believed, that, when almost the whole mass of commercial duties was removed, the difference to individuals, from the relief, would be worth fully the 2*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.* in every 100*l.* of their incomes that the income-tax would take from them. From this tax, all incomes below 150*l.* were to be exempted. This was very well. But it was not so well that income from all sources was to be treated alike; that the receiver of a temporary annuity of 200*l.* from the funds, for instance, should pay 5*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* out of it, in the very last year, while the receiver of 200*l.* per annum from landed property paid only the same sum; and, again, that the professional man — the surgeon or lawyer — who, in the decline of life, was beginning to earn 1000*l.* per annum, but who had not made a provision for the family who would lose their income at his death, should pay the same amount of tax as the proprietor who would transmit a rental of 1000*l.* to his children. This was regarded at the time, and has been regarded more and more since, as the great imperfection of the ministerial scheme. It was allowed to pass at first, because the tax was proposed as a temporary one; and it was felt that the vast labor and difficulty of making arrangements for the ascertainment of the sources of income and the apportionment of the tax could hardly be got through before the term of its

imposition would have arrived. But arrangements should have been made for the prosecution of this task from the moment it was supposed that a renewal of the tax would be necessary. It has been twice renewed, with the entire approbation of the majority of clear-headed and public-spirited men in the country, many of whom would be glad to see it increased to 10 per cent, for the sake of the abolition of all other taxes; and yet nothing is done or promised about proportioning the tax to the salable value of incomes. After deducting the incomes under 150*l.*, which would have yielded a quarter of the whole amount, the impost was expected to afford something above three millions and a half. As for its duration, five years would have been proposed unconditionally, but for the chance of one of those turns of commercial prosperity which might render its continuance unnecessary. It was, therefore, to cease at the end of three years, or go on to five, as Parliament should at the time see fit. Ireland was exempted from the tax, not only on account of her poverty, but because, not being subject to assessed taxes, she had no machinery for the collection of this duty; and the consequences of setting up such a machinery, in the existing state of Ireland, required the gravest consideration. It was proposed to levy an equivalent amount of tax in Ireland by increased duties on spirits,—the consumption of which was again on the increase, from the decline of the temperance movement,—and by equalizing the stamp-duties in England and Ireland. Absentees, residing in England from choice, and not public duty, would be subject to the income-tax, as English residents. One other measure for increasing the revenue was proposed,—the extension of the 4*s.* duty on the export of coal, hitherto partial, to all exportation of that article. Here would be a revenue, it was supposed, of 4,380,000*l.* from these new sources. After supplying the deficit, what was to be done with the surplus?

It was to be applied in the largest reduction of commercial taxation ever contemplated by Cabinet or Parliament. New tariff. Out of 1200 articles subject to customs-duties, 750 were to be reduced.¹ The first principle was, the Minister said, to remove prohibition; and the next, to reduce duties on the raw materials of manufactures to 5 per cent or less. On articles partially manufactured, the duty would now never exceed 12 per cent; nor, on articles wholly manufactured, 20 per cent. The loss by these 750 reductions would not, he believed, exceed 270,000*l.*,—a small sum for which to have borne so vexatious a taxation for so long! The new tariff was all ready,—divided under twenty heads,—laid on the table this Friday night, so as to be read by every tradesman in Great Britain on Monday

¹ Hansard, lxi. p. 450.

morning, and talked over in every Monday club. As Sir R. Peel took the document from the hands of Mr. Gladstone, loud cheers arose from every part of the House; and every one probably felt that it was worth waiting through the recess for a hope of rescue like this at the end of it.

The late ministers very properly excused themselves from giving an immediate opinion with regard to a scheme so vast as to require much consideration; and Lord J. Russell satisfied himself with making some small objections which occurred to him at the moment. These gentlemen now found that Sir R. Peel had "courage" to propose an income-tax: and those who were familiar with their social and domestic intercourses knew that they were penetrated with admiration at the statesmanship now before them; and that the generosity of the most captious among them was roused for the time, and the evil spirit of jealousy laid asleep. But it was for only too short a time, — only for three days or so. Then the evil awoke, as rancorous as ever, and stung the ex-ministers into acts of opposition, which showed most meanly on the broad background of the government policy. When Lord J. Russell, aware of the desperate state of our financial management, asked, in regard to the income-tax, "What will France say?" it was felt that the meanness of opposition could go no further. The reply of the Minister was: "The noble Lord says, 'Do not impose the income-tax, because you will show foreign nations that the resources of this country are exhausted.'¹ I say, never mind what may be the impression on foreign countries. Do that which you believe to be just, that which you think consistent with sound policy, and let foreign nations think what they will." Lord John Russell, however, avowing this to be his strongest ground of objection against the tax, declared his determination to oppose it in every stage of discussion, — on the resolutions, on the report, the first reading, the second reading, and the third reading.² The Minister was anxious to have the decision of the House before the Easter holidays; and some of the leading members of the opposition endeavored to protect him from the abuse of the power of obtaining adjournments: but a small minority baffled them all, and deferred the decisive consideration of the measure till after the 4th of April.

The object was, of course, to rouse popular feeling against the Bill. There could hardly be a more promising occasion; for, while every tax is disagreeable, and every heavy tax eminently so, there is something transcendently disgusting in an income-tax, which not only takes a substantial sum immediately out of a man's pocket, but compels him to expose his affairs to a party that he would by no means choose for a

¹ Hansard, lxi. p. 907.

² Hansard, lxi. p. 943.

confidant. The vexation and grumbling were great at the time, and have been so ever since. In the books at the Bank of England may be seen parenthetical exclamations, such as "Damn Sir Robert Peel and all his crew!" and the like, so numerous that the book-keepers found it vain to oppose such a method of pronouncing on the measure. Merchants, old enough to remember the war property-tax, anticipated surcharges, and the return of all the injured and angry feelings under which they used to suffer without redress. The young professional man quaked at the necessity he saw before him of either owning himself to be earning less than 150*l.* a year, or paying a tax out of his bare means of bread to keep up his professional credit. There was no lack of discontent and apprehension; and this the Minister surely anticipated: but he anticipated no less confidently, and no less correctly, that the discontent and apprehension would be less powerful than the desire for financial release and security. Men would rather submit to the most disagreeable of taxes than go on as the nation had been doing for the last six years. They responded to the call of the government to rouse themselves to a great effort to recover a position of safety and honor; and all attempts to excite them to opposition during the Easter recess completely failed. After the House met, there was a debate of four nights on an amendment, condemnatory of the tax, of Lord J. Russell's; but it merely exhibited the fact, that the choice lay between an income-tax — including a property-tax — and loans; the last being more eminently than a property-tax a resource proper to war-time, being indeed a disgrace in time of peace. The popular confidence in the new Ministry had raised the funds; and some Whig leaders showed what an advantageous time this would be for a loan: and it was this which occasioned the energetic passage of the debate, which, greeted with cheers and counter-cheers and laughter in the House, met with the same reception everywhere, and became at once celebrated.¹ "I call upon you," said Sir R. Peel, in reply to Lord J. Russell's suggestion of a new loan, — "I call upon you to make great exertion; and the first step you take towards recovery, the first demonstration of your willingness, will be half the victory. If you are afraid to submit to sacrifices; if you paint in glowing colors the miserable condition of those who are to pay taxes; if you say it is better to go on on the present system, increasing the debt a little more, funding at 91, — why are the 3 per cents at 91? Who has made them 91? Public credit is high, the funds have risen, and say you, 'You can have a loan easily now!' O you miserable financiers! [Laughter and cheers.] I beg pardon if, in the heat of debate, I have used a word that

¹ Hansard, lxii. p. 170.

may give offence. But the funds are high, because you have shown a disposition not to resort to a system of loans in time of peace." Lord J. Russell's amendment was rejected by a vote of 308 to 202, on the 13th of April; and another amendment, proposing the reading of the Bill on that day six months, was thrown out on the 18th by a vote of 285 to 188.¹ The progress of the Bill through committee was rapid.² After the rejection of a few amendments, little further opposition was made. Eighty clauses were disposed of on the night of the 2d of May; and, on the 30th of May, the third reading was carried by a majority of 130, and the Bill passed the Commons. In the Lords, there was no debate till the third reading; and what there was, did not prevent the Bill from passing the same evening, by a majority of 71.

The speech which appears to have most truly represented the predominant opinion and sentiment in regard to the income-tax was that of Mr. Raikes Currie,—a member who had been in Parliament since 1837, but had hardly opened his lips till now, when he did it to more purpose than anybody else.³ He avowed that he came into Parliament in the hope of aiding in a large and secure extension and protection of the suffrage; but that that hope had been balked by Lord John Russell's declaration, that he considered the Reform Bill a final measure, and that it was by a determinate purpose that the preponderance of the landed interest in Parliament was provided for. Under this preponderance of monopolists, all efforts of the Liberal party against monopolies must be hopeless; and especially while, as at present, there was no appearance of popular support of the Whigs. When Lord John Russell had "slammed the door of the constitution in the face of the unrepresented," he was surely bound to offer no factious opposition to measures in which liberal principles were embodied. The only hope left was in the carrying of liberal measures by those who had power to carry them. He considered himself at full liberty to consider separately, and in entire independence of party, the measures brought forward which contained any popular promise; and he certainly considered the proposal of the income-tax as full of such promise. He was aware of all the evils of that tax,—from those on the surface to those in its depths; but it had the great virtue which could cover even that amount of evils,—that it spared the poor, and laid the burden of taxation where it could best be borne. He saw the beginning of a new era in this appeal to the moneyed classes of the nation to restore the national resources; and, approving the measure, he felt himself bound over to candor towards its originator. He saw no use in driving

¹ Hansard, lxii. p. 444.

² Hansard, lxii. p. 710.

³ Hansard, lxii. pp. 682, 688.

the Minister—if that were possible—into the arms of ultra-Protectionists by persecution. He remembered that Minister's declaration, that he considered the prosperity of the manufacturing classes of more consequence to the landed interest than any protective laws; and he considered this a sufficient ground for giving him fair-play,—even if he had not been now the only hope of popular progress. This statement, remarkable and much remarked on at the time, is even more valuable now. It then served as an exposition of a widely spread view, and as a guide to some who were still perplexed what to think and do; but now its political truth is so verified, that the speech reads rather as a commentary on Sir R. Peel's course, and the state of parties during his term of office, than as a piece of reflection at the outset. The operation of the income-tax commenced from the 5th of April, 1842.

It has been mentioned, that a copy of the proposed tariff had been laid before Parliament, and printed off for the benefit of the country. This first copy could not be the working one. As the Minister explained, it was necessary, in preparing the measure, to avoid communication with persons actually interested in the supposed protection of particular articles; but it was next necessary to allow such persons time and opportunity to state their views on their own behalf. The changes made in consequence of such representations were not such as to occasion much delay; and, by the 5th of May, the amended copy of the proposed tariff was on the table of the House. It may be questioned whether any measure connected with finance, brought forward in Parliament at any former time, ever caused such deep and glowing satisfaction throughout the educated classes of this country as this new tariff. When it was considered that the Minister's business was,—not that of the amateur financier, to make out a perfect scheme,—but to propose a reform that would work, it was felt that this was the soundest and most remarkable budget ever brought forward,—the soundest in its principle, and the most remarkable in its courage and comprehensiveness.

As the income-tax was intended to tax wealth, the new tariff was mainly designed to relieve manufacturing industry. The prospects now opened were very cheering. Owing to the high duties on foreign woods, we had not hitherto been able to keep those woods, and make them into furniture at home, but had been obliged to let them go to France and Germany, to employ the cabinet-makers there, and then to import the furniture. Now, the cabinet-trade was to be so relieved, that there was hope that we might export furniture. The free command of dye-woods, again, was highly important to our manufactures. As for ores,

New tariff in
the Com-
mons.

copper had hitherto been smelted in bond, and actually sent away on account of the duties, while we had to import from France and Belgium copper smelted with our own coal. Oils and extracts, indispensable in many manufactures, were made freely accessible by reduction of duty. And above all these benefits was that of the change in the timber-duties. Colonial timber was to be admitted duty-free; and this would enable Parliament to diminish the duties on Baltic timber to the lowest point consistent with good faith towards Canada. The greatest authority on free-trade subjects, Mr. Deacon Hume, had said, that, if we had untaxed timber as we had untaxed coal and untaxed iron, we should be provided with the three great primary raw materials of employment and consumption. This we were henceforth to have. We should have better ship-building, and more of it. Our fisheries would extend, from the superior character of fishing-boats. The quality of our dwelling-houses, bridges, and utensils of various kinds, could not but be greatly improved.

Among the most interesting of the proposed changes were those relating to food. The agriculturalists would benefit by the introduction of clover and other seeds, which had hitherto paid a high duty. The farmers liked this very well; but they were dreadfully alarmed at what was to be done about cattle, salt-meat, and fish. There was no reason to apprehend that the British nation could be fed in independence of the British farmer and grazier; but it really seemed as if some people thought such a thing might happen. It was well that there were wide differences of opinion on each head. While some feared for our graziers from the introduction of cattle from the continent, others thought that the graziers would profit largely by the fattening of the lean beasts which would be imported; for there never was a doubt, unhappily, that the consumption of meat in England ought to be very much larger indeed than it had been any time within this century. The consumption of meat was nowhere on the increase in any proportion to the increase of numbers; and, in too many localities, it was known that meat-eating was becoming confined to a higher and a higher class in society. The Minister, for one, therefore, had no apprehension of the ruin of the graziers from the alteration; and he proposed to admit cattle, fresh and salted meat, hams, lard, salmon, and herrings, at duties considerably reduced. The immediate panic among the ignorant agricultural class was great; and there were, as usual, adventurers ready to make their market of it. Butchers' meat from Hamburg was advertised at 3*d.* per lb., while the people of Hamburg were themselves paying 6*d.* Numbers of graziers and farmers sold off their cattle for whatever they could get, and said that Sir R. Peel's tariff was ruining them. Every horned head seen on deck on the arrival

of vessels at Hull or Harwich, counted for a dozen to alarmed imaginations; and the pigs reported were innumerable. But these were mistakes sure of speedy correction; and, in a few months, some people laughed, and others sighed, on finding how far the supply of animal food fell short of the national want.

The Minister found some difficulty in carrying out the true principle of reducing duties to the point which should obviate smuggling. On this principle, the duty on straw-plat had been reduced from 17*s.* per lb. to 5*s.*; but the stir made was so great, and apparently so charitable towards the poor women and children in country districts, whose employment was supposed to be at stake, that the point was yielded so far as to raise the 5*s.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* But the Minister pointed out the mistake in Parliament, producing, to the great amusement of the House, and no doubt of the smuggling portion of society, an ordinary-looking bundle of straw for platting, in the centre of which was concealed a small roll of straw-plat, such as it would still be worth while to smuggle, if the duty was higher than 5*s.* per lb. Some opposition was made to the new duties on swine and fish and apples and butter and other articles; but large majorities in every case affirmed the government duties. The Whitsuntide holidays had allowed time for consultation and reflection; the panic about the importation of cattle had ceased already, and mutton was again 7*d.* and even 8*d.* per lb.; so that all was fair for carrying the new tariff. The objections of opposition related to the omission of sugar from the tariff reductions, and the treatment of corn, and the difference between the duties on colonial and on foreign productions. The replies were, that the reduction of the corn-duties was considerable enough for the present; that the case of sugar was an exceptional one; and that government had done all it could in freeing colonial produce: thus preparing for negotiation about foreign produce, and setting an example of fearless freedom of trade to other countries. On the whole, there was a more general assent than usual to the measure, and less party recrimination. The ex-ministers told of what they had intended to do in the same direction, if they had not been stopped by their failure in the treatment of the first two articles,—corn and sugar. Here was the thing done,—every one feeling that the corn question was as truly a merely deferred one as the sugar. Both these remained to be dealt with hereafter; and meantime here was a provision for the extension of manufactures and commerce, the increase of food, and such a reduction in the general cost of living as would go far to enable the people to pay their new income-tax, and perhaps compensate for it. Men might differ, and did differ, as to whether this new tariff was valuable only as a move in the right direction, or whether it

would also achieve what its authors hoped, in the extension of trade, and the improvement of comfort; but none—unless it were a few bigots in and out of Parliament—doubted the Customs-acts Reform to be a good thing. One gentleman would have free-trade in every thing but herrings, another in every thing but straw-plat, and Sir R. Peel and Lord J. Russell in every thing but corn: but these separate opinions merged in general satisfaction, that, out of 1200 articles that paid customs-duties, 750 were to be reduced; and a large majority of these to a merely nominal amount.¹ The Bill passed the Commons, amidst loud cheering, on the 28th of June.

In the other House, Lord Stanhope prophesied that the measure would be fatal to the power and reputation of the Minister who brought it forward, and that we should end by having our navy and many other classes fed by foreigners instead of by British farmers. Lord Colchester thought he might vote for this Bill without advocating the general principles of free-trade, and merely as an improvement in customs management. Lord Stanhope labored hard with amendments in committee, and against the third reading,—but in vain; and Lord Radnor was as energetic in opposition, for the reason that the Bill did not go far enough. But those two were joined by only seven more on the last decisive occasion, when the Bill passed by a vote of 52 to 9, on the 8th of July.

The article of sugar was not passed over this session because it did not stand in the tariff.² It had a debate to itself. The subject was becoming a difficult one; and men were growing positive and peremptory as usual, in proportion to the difficulty. No difficulties, in all our mortal experience, are so formidable as those which—the result of wrong doing—attend the transition from wrong to right doing; and the perplexities about slave-produce were now showing themselves to be in proportion to the moral mistake and offence of slavery. Amidst the never-ending complexities of the subject, and entanglements of the yearly debates, we may single out the two most important aspects of the question, and show how they appeared at this time.

On the one hand, the West-India planters urged, that their lives had grown up, and their property been employed, under the legal institution of negro slavery, and a system of protective duties on sugar: now, slavery was abolished in their islands, but not in other sugar-producing countries; and they claimed the continuance of high sugar-duties, both as a carrying-out of the system under which they had invested their fortunes in the West Indies, and as a necessary condition of

¹ Hansard, lxi. p. 742.

² Hansard, lxi. p. 1168.

their competing with countries where slave-labor was at command. On the other hand, the friends of the poor in England showed how sugar had become truly a necessary of life, when it was needful for the infant's food in the cottage, and for the temperate man's meal of tea or coffee,—which were largely superseding intoxicating drinks,—and for the use of many articles of food which could not be eaten without it. They showed the hardship and, as they considered, the iniquity, of making the British laborer, who had already paid so much to the planters as compensation for the loss of slave property, now go without sugar, or pay double for it, to bolster up the fortunes which had been invested under a bad system,—a system whose badness insured its overthrow. Somebody must suffer,—as is always the case where a social sin has been committed; and that somebody ought to be anybody rather than the British laborer. Then, reasons were alleged why it ought to be, and must be, the planter-class that should suffer,—that a system requiring high duties cannot, in our age of the world, exist for any length of time; that the withdrawal of protection would compel the planters to better methods of cultivation,—to more agricultural skill and improved management; and that, if estates could not be made to answer under such improved methods, they were not worth sustaining at all. This was one aspect of the controversy.

The other related to the condition of the institution of slavery in the world, to our relation to it, and to the effect upon it of our rate of sugar-duty. The controversy here was as to whether we had so pledged ourselves to the cause of human liberty as to make it supersede the interests of our planters in the West Indies, and our laborers at home; whether, in short, it was a case in which we were unreservedly to sacrifice the interests of individuals to the maintenance of a great principle of social morals all over the world. In connection with this was the question, whether, as a matter of fact, slavery was restrained by our high sugar-duties and other arrangements, and whether it would be aggravated by admitting free-trade principles into this department of international traffic. On the one hand, it was proved that the slave-trade was constantly on the increase, in spite of all arrangements, if not in consequence of them; and it was argued, that the strongest political ground for the abolition of slavery was the superior value of free over slave labor: while, on the other hand, it was protested, that the peculiarity of the case took it out of the category of free-trade; and that, if slave-grown sugar were admitted to our markets under any duties which would leave it within reach of popular consumption, a great stimulus would be given to slave cultivation, and a new lease of life given to the criminal institution.

The anti-slavery view.

From year to year were these opposing views brought forward, and supported by their respective arguments. On the present occasion, the explanations of the government were looked forward to with impatience, from the increased eagerness of the friends of the people that they should have cheap sugar while enjoying so many other relaxations, and because the late ministers insisted on a reduction of the sugar-duties, as next in importance to their 8s. corn-duty. On the 3d of June, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared the inability of the government to reduce the sugar-duties that year, well pleased as they would be to do it.¹ To reduce the colonial sugar, and not the foreign, would be to forfeit some revenue without effectually diminishing the cost to the consumer; and there were two objections to reducing the foreign sugar-duty, — the loss to the revenue, which would be greater than could be adventured in the same year with the tariff reduction; and the delay of foreign powers in affording a sufficient guarantee against slavery and the slave-trade. An antislavery sentiment was springing up in slaveholding communities, and it might be eminently mischievous to the antislavery cause to throw open our markets at that juncture to slave-grown sugar. The government, therefore, could offer no change this year; and the reductions proposed by opposition members were rejected by large majorities.² In the session of 1843, the same process was gone through: the ministers proposed no change, and gave the same reasons; and they were met by the same arguments and some fruitless amendments from the opposition.

There was not time, towards the close of the busy and profitable session, for a full discussion of the Poor-law Bill, Poor-law Renewal Act. — so deeply as the question of pauper relief was affected by the urgent distress of the times. Many members had much to say against the existing law, and new arrangements to propose; and it was absolutely necessary to do something, for the commission had been renewed, by a vote in the preceding session, for one year; and there must be a provision made against the expiration of the term. With some trouble and difficulty, the Home Secretary obtained a renewal of the term of the commission for five years, and a settling of some indispensable practical points. A strong effort was made by Mr. Escott to procure permission for magistrates to administer out-door relief at their discretion; but under no pressure of haste, or alarm at the prevailing distress, could the House be so mad as to vote away the essential principle of the great Poor-law Reform, though there seemed, at one moment, some fear that it might.³ Mr. Escott's motion in favor of out-door relief at the discretion

¹ Hansard, lxiii. p. 1135.

² Hansard, lxiii. pp. 1175, 1233.

³ Hansard, lxv. p. 356.

of the magistrates was rejected by a majority of 90 to 55; and the commission was renewed for five years, under a promise from Sir James Graham that he would introduce a new Bill early in the next session, in which some needful reforms should be proposed.¹

This year, 1842, settled the law of literary property, as it at present stands, and as it will stand for a long time to come. Before the days of Queen Anne, it was concluded, as a matter of course, that any book or other literary production was the property of its author; and the old registers of the Stationers' Company show that some thousands of books, even as early as the times of Elizabeth, passed from owner to owner, by descent or sale, like any other property.² Acts of Parliament, and Star-chamber decrees also afford evidence that political and legal authorities considered literary works to be the exclusive property of their authors. At no time does any one appear to have doubted the author's exclusive right over his production while it remained in manuscript. The doubt, when it arose, related to his ownership, when, by act of publication, he had made his ideas general property. The doubt seems to exhibit a mere confusion between the ideas and the vehicle in which they are communicated, — between plagiarism and piracy. The people of the United States appear to be still unable to make the distinction. Because they can derive and reproduce ideas from an English book, they cannot see why they should not lay hands on the work itself, reprint it, pocket the proceeds of the sale without consideration of the author, and, as long as our own laws allowed the practice, send their cheap copies to Europe, and sell them under the author's own eye. Yet more: they cannot see why they should not take a work by an English author whose name will secure a sale, cut out some portions of the book, alter the title, make it such as the author would not acknowledge, put his name to it, profit by that name, and send him no share of the proceeds. They cannot see why they should not put the author's name to a work which he has chosen to publish anonymously. Barbarous and base as this ignorance and cupidity appear, unable as such agents show themselves to be to conceive of a book as a work of art which must no more be tampered with than a statue or a picture, it but little exceeds our own barbarism on this subject a century and a half ago, or even that which might be found among the unreflecting and unintellectual up to the period of the passage of the Copyright Act of 1842.

If books were, before the eighteenth century, considered as of course the property of their authors, the supposition is now held

¹ Hansard, lxx. p. 377.

² Polit. Dict. i. p. 639.

to have been put an end to by the passage of a law which secured to authors and their heirs the property in their works ^{Act of 1710.} for a term of years, — which was, in fact, taking the property from them after the expiration of that term of years. The Act was passed in 1710; and the term fixed was twenty-one years from the day of publication for works already in print, and fourteen years for all works to be henceforward published; the latter term being once renewable, if the author should be still living at the end of the first fourteen years.¹ More than half a century afterwards, however, Lord Mansfield and other authorities settled, as they thought, that the perpetual right of the author over his work was not put an end to by the statute of 1710; but again, five years afterwards, Lord Mansfield and those who agreed with him — the judges being in fact equally divided — were overruled; and it was decided, from 1774 onwards, that perpetual copyright was put an end to by the intervention of statutes. In 1814, the term was extended in favor of authors it being now fixed at twenty-eight years for ^{Act of 1814.} the author and his assigns, and furthermore for the term of the author's life, if he should survive the twenty-eight years' term.

The mischiefs of these restrictions were found to be such as had not been dreamed of by law-makers, who believed ^{Movement in 1839.} they were granting a boon to authors; and, by this time, some of these evils were becoming evident to the most careless and uninterested. The family of Sir Walter Scott, stripped by his great losses, might be supposed to have an honorable provision in his splendid array of works, which the world was still buying as eagerly as ever; but the term of copyright of *Waverley* was about to expire; and there was no one who could not see the injustice of transferring to the public a property so evidently sacred to heirs. Again, the poet Wordsworth was now an aged man. His was a reputation which it had taken half a century to bring out clear from the prejudices and false tastes of society in his early day. If he were to die now, his family would be deprived of all benefit from the sale of his works. Again, Southey came forward to declare that he had been prevented by the existing copyright law from undertaking works of weight, research, and permanent value, from inability to undertake labors whose fruits would be taken from him and his heirs just when the world was beginning to find the value of his books, and to buy them. It was clear, that the operation of the law was to discourage the preparation of solid works, requiring research and the expenses which belong to it, and yielding pecuniary recompense only slowly and tardily; while it encouraged a flashy light literature, such as might command an

¹ Polit. Dict. i. p. 641.

immediate, though temporary sale. Probably the attention of the careless was fixed on this question of literary property by

Petitions. the petitions sent up to Parliament by various authors about this time; and by none more than by the pe-

tion of Thomas Carlyle, which bears date in the spring of 1839. This petition is a remarkable document, which may well find its place here, from its including considerations of greater depth, and more importance to social philosophy and morals, than some matters to which a greater space has necessarily been given.

"To the Honorable the Commons of England, in Parliament assembled, the petition of THOMAS CARLYLE, a writer of books,¹

"Humbly sheweth,

"That your petitioner has written certain books, being incited thereto by various innocent or laudable considerations, chiefly by the thought that said books might in the end be found to be worth something. That your petitioner had not the happiness to receive from Mr. Thomas Tegg, or any publisher, republisher, printer, bookseller, bookbuyer, or other the like man or body of men, any encouragement or countenance in writing of said books, or to discern any chance of receiving such; but wrote them by effort of his own, and the favor of Heaven. That all useful labor is worthy of recompense; that all honest labor is worthy of the chance of recompense; that the giving and assuring to each man what recompense his labor has actually merited may be said to be the business of all legislation, polity, government, and social arrangement whatever among men,—a business indispensable to attempt, impossible to accomplish accurately, difficult to accomplish without inaccuracies, that become enormous, unsupportable, and the parent of social confusions which never altogether end. That your petitioner does not undertake to say what recompense in money this labor of his may deserve; whether it deserve any recompense in money, or whether money in any quantity could hire him to do the like. That this his labor has found hitherto, in money, or money's worth, small recompense or none; that he is by no means sure of its ever finding recompense; but thinks that, if so, it will be at a distant time, when he, the laborer, will probably no longer be in need of money, and those dear to him will still be in need of it. That the law does at least protect all persons in selling the production of their labor at what they can get for it, in all market-places to all lengths of time. Much more than this the law does to many; but so much it does to all, and less than this to none. That your petitioner cannot discover himself to have done unlawfully in this his said labor of writing books, or to have become criminal, or have forfeited the law's protection thereby. Contrariwise, your petitioner believes firmly that he is innocent in said labor; that, if he be found in the long-run to have written a genuine enduring book, his merit therein, and desert towards England and English and other men, will be considerable, and not easily estimable in money; that, on the other hand, if his book prove false and ephemeral, he and it will be abolished and forgotten, and no harm done. That, in this manner, your petitioner plays no unfair game against the world; his stake being life itself, so to speak,—for the penalty is death by starvation,—and the world's stake nothing till once it see the dice thrown; so that in any case the world cannot lose. That, in the happy and long-doubtful event of the game's going in his favor, your petitioner submits that the small winnings thereof do belong to him or his, and that no other mortal has justly either part or lot in them at all, now, henceforth, or for ever. May it therefore please your honorable House to protect him in said happy and long-doubtful event; and, by passing your Copyright Bill, forbid all Thomas Teggs, and other extraneous persons, entirely unconcerned in this adventure of his, to steal from him his small winnings, for a space of sixty years at the shortest. After sixty years, unless your honorable House provide otherwise, they may begin to steal.

"And your petitioner will ever pray.

"THOMAS CARLYLE."

¹ London Examiner, April 7, 1839.

The sixty years here mentioned were the term proposed by the mover for a new Copyright Act, — Mr. Sergeant Talfourd, — in three successive sessions. In 1841, his Bill was thrown out, mainly through the influence of a speech of Mr. Macaulay's, which afforded an humbling proof of the carelessness of the House on subjects which had not been long rendered familiar by discussion. As for the riddle how an able literary man could utter such a speech, and venture to offer it to the House, the answer given at the time was, that there must be reasons behind — some cause which could not be alleged — for such a man exposing himself in a speech unsound in its whole argument, and for the House acting upon it. The reason most commonly supposed was, that the Bill before the House was badly drawn, and could not have been worked: if so, it might have been better to have pointed this out. But it does not matter much what the real reason was; for Mr. Macaulay himself wrought on the other side in the next session, when Sergeant Talfourd was no longer in the House. Lord Mahon brought forward the subject, proposing an extension of twenty-five years in the term of literary proprietorship. Mr. Macaulay proposed a term of forty-two years, on which the House decided.¹ Moreover, the House accepted another amendment brought forward by Lord Mahon and opposed by Mr. Macaulay, which gave to the heirs a further term of seven years from the death of the author.² Under the somewhat sudden zeal for the rights of authors, therefore, shown by Parliament in 1842, the law awarded to authors the sole property of their works for life, and to their heirs for seven years more.³ If those seven years should expire before the end of forty-two years from the time of publication, then the right was to run through the forty-two years. This was something gained in the direction of justice; and few now doubt that it will be found possible so to make arrangements for the preparation of cyclopædias and other compilations as in time to allow to authors and their heirs their literary property in perpetuity, as every argument for such a product being property at all is adverse to its ceasing to be so at any particular date. If the institution of property is to stand, it is hardly possible that this kind — of so special and high an order — should remain precarious and transitory in comparison with all else.

As the elections of 1841 had been a last struggle for and against the maintenance of the Whig government, it was natural that bribery — always too common at a general election — should abound; and it was believed that on this occasion the profligacy had exceeded all ordinary limits.

¹ Hansard, lx. p. 1429.² Hansard, lxi. p. 1397.³ Polit. Dict. i. p. 641.

Several cases had been brought before election committees in the Commons for investigation; and the termination of some of these inquiries was so strange as to attract suspicion, and cause uneasiness, both in and out of the House. The return of the members for Reading was objected to, on the ground of bribery; evidence was produced before the committee, which went to substantiate the charges; and, in the midst of the business, the committee was suddenly informed that the petition was withdrawn. There was nothing to be done but for the committee to declare the sitting members duly elected; but every one suspected that this was not the end of the matter. Presently it was announced that one of the members for Reading was about to accept the Chiltern Hundreds. A similar proceeding followed in a second case, and a third, and a fourth; and, where the seat was not immediately vacated, or declared to be held only till next month, it was rumored and believed that the resignation would take place at the end of the session. This was a degree of corruption not to be endured; and, on the 5th of May, Mr. Roebuck gave notice that, on the next evening, he should put a question to the member for Reading, and other members whom he named.

On the 6th, a singular scene took place in the House,—a scene very instructive to those who witnessed it, and to those who afterwards read of it. Mr. Roebuck was universally regarded as an upright man and independent member, who had the fullest right that uprightness and independence could give to watch over the purity of the representation, and rebuke every act of corruption. But he was also felt to be fully conscious of his position, and not at all too modest in the exhibition of it. He was considered rather too apt to assume the office of censor on occasions which were hardly worth the unpopularity he attracted to himself by it; and, by long tenure of this office, his speaking had verged more and more towards lecturing,—towards admonition,—in an assemblage where such a tone is least admissible. After he had announced that he had a question to ask of the member for Reading, and other members, there was much eagerness for the sport. Every one knew that Mr. Roebuck would be in the right, and his victims most miserably embarrassed by the wrong of their position; and the scene was likely to be a curious one, between the haughty purism of the censor on the one hand, and the impotent anger of the compromised members on the other. The scene was a curious one, but not through any frailties of Mr. Roebuck's. According to all accounts, he was quiet and courteous in manner, said nothing more than the occasion justified, and made only such inquiry as it was incumbent on any member to make who had at heart the honor of Parliament and the integrity of the representation.

Mr. Roebuck, addressing himself to Lord Chelsea, one of the members for Reading, said he had heard and believed that the inquiry before the committee had been put an end to by a compromise, in which one, if not both, of the members for Reading was concerned, — a bond having been entered into with their knowledge, if not in their names, to the effect that one or both of them should vacate his seat by accepting the Chiltern Hundreds.¹ Such a transaction was a breach of the privileges of the House; and he was therefore entitled to ask, which he did with the most perfect respect for Lord Chelsea, whether he was cognizant of any such arrangement. The same question was afterwards put, with the same deliberation and courtesy, to the members for Nottingham, Lewes, Penryn, and Harwich. Most of the members appealed to made the weakest possible reply. They assumed an air of indignation, and refused to answer impertinent questions about their private affairs and personal arrangements. As the question was based on the strong ground of the privilege of Parliament, this futile reply was equivalent to an admission of inability to make a better; and it was thus received, — Mr. Roebuck thanking each gentleman significantly for his answer, and the House listening in mingled anxiety and amusement. One member, Mr. Elphinstone, avowed that an objectionable compromise had been agreed upon; that he was no party to it; and that he was not going to vacate his seat, — a welcome piece of frankness and manliness in the midst of the strange scene.² Captain Plumridge, who sat for Penryn, was no less intrepid. He said he knew nothing of the compromise till it was made; and he disapproved of the arrangement when he was told of it, and did so still.³ But he afterwards drew upon himself a rebuke from Mr. Roebuck, by declaring, in terms which made the lax assemblage laugh uproariously, that he retired because he had “made a bad bargain.” In the midst of the questioning scene, the Chancellor of the Exchequer endeavored to break in, and call the attention of the House to a discussion on the income-tax: but the inclination of the House was to see this business to an end; and it did so. After all the impugned members had answered, or declined to answer, the discussion was adjourned to the next Monday. It then appeared how awakening was the impression made on the House, and how useless were all attempts to stifle Mr. Roebuck’s inquiry. A committee of investigation was appointed; and it was clear, that, though the work of that committee might be impeded, and the express aims of its author thwarted by technical devices, the honor of the House was really appealed to, and some check was put upon corruption. One striking incident was the refusal of the appointment of steward

¹ Hansard, lxiii. p. 209. ² Hansard, lxiii. p. 214. ³ Hansard, lxlii. p. 224.

of the Chiltern Hundreds by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Stewardship
of the Chil-
tern Hun-
dreds.

There was, once upon a time, such an office in reality, — the business of the steward being to watch over the safety of that district of Buckinghamshire called the Chiltern Hundreds, when its woods were infested with banditti, who were a perpetual trouble to the rural inhabitants. The office had long been merely nominal; but it served, under the description of “a place of honor and profit under the Crown,” as a means of vacating a seat in Parliament, which cannot be resigned under any other plea than having accepted such an office. The office is resigned as soon as the parliamentary seat is vacated, that it may be ready for the next applicant. On the present occasion, the application of one of the members for Reading was met by the following reply from the Chancellor of the Exchequer: “Under ordinary circumstances, I should not feel justified in availing myself of the discretion vested in me, in order to refuse or delay the appointment for which you have applied, when sought for with a view to the resignation of a seat in Parliament.¹ But, after the disclosures which have taken place with respect to certain boroughs, of which Reading is one, and after the admission of the facts by the parties interested, I consider, that, by lending my assistance to the fulfilment of any engagement which may have been entered into as arising out of any such compromise, I should, in some sort, make myself a party to transactions which I do not approve, and of which the House of Commons has implied its condemnation. I feel, moreover, that by a refusal on my part of the means by which alone such engagements can be fulfilled, I afford the most effectual discouragement to the entering into similar compromises in future, and thus promote, so far as is in my power, the intentions of the House of Commons.”

Mr. Roebuck moved for and obtained a committee of investigation into the cases before the House. He moved Proceedings in the House. for and obtained a Bill of indemnity to witnesses; and the inquiry was conducted with closed doors. The committee reported towards the end of July; and it was this report which decided Mr. Goulburn to refuse the Chiltern Hundreds to Lord Chelsea. On the refusal being canvassed in the House, the Premier avowed that Mr. Goulburn had acted with the concurrence of the whole Cabinet.² Mr. Roebuck's resolutions, founded on the report of the committee, against issuing writs for the compromised boroughs till Parliament had provided some security against election bribery, were negatived; but every one felt, that the report, with its disclosures and dispassionate comments, could not be inoperative.³ Lord John Russell introduced a Bill, whose

¹ Polit. Dict. i. p. 500. ² Hansard, lxxv. p. 1109. ³ Hansard, lxxv. p. 833.

chief objects were to facilitate the disclosure of bribery committed, rather than to visit it with new penalties; and to prevent such compromises as had lately disgraced the House. The Bill passed both Houses before the conclusion of the session, and became law on the 10th of August.¹

There was something really refreshing to the country, in the midst of its distresses, in the character and action of this session of Parliament. At the beginning, the ^{Character of the session.} opposition was hostile, saucy, active, and united; and it was curious to see how it changed under the eye of a Minister who could frame measures first, and then carry them. Some of his measures were as unacceptable to classes and parties as any that had been brought forward for some years; yet their progress, from their first conception to their becoming the law of the land, was never delayed. The nation saw and felt that its business was understood and accomplished, and the House of Commons was no longer like a sleeper under nightmare. The long session was a busy one. The Queen wore a cheerful air when she thanked her Parliament for their effectual labors. The opposition was no longer such as could impede the operations of the next session. The condition of the country was fearful enough; but something was done for its future improvement, and the way was now shown to be open for further beneficent legislation. The solitary circumstance of congratulation, in regard to the condition of the people, was, that there was once more a good harvest.

¹ Hansard, lxx. p. 1214.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Parliament re-assembled on the 2d of February, there was no increased hopefulness in any quarter. The central subject of debate. distress had deepened; the revenue returns indicated a lessened consumption of articles of popular comfort; and the agricultural interests were almost as depressed and alarmed as the manufacturing and commercial classes. Some said the tariff had done no good, — forgetting that, as much of it did not come into use till October, it was too soon yet to form a judgment. Some said the tariff caused the distress; and this was so far true, that the ignorant among the agricultural body did fall into a panic about the importation of food, and incur great losses by selling off stock, and spreading their own fears over their own class. Some apprehended another change in the corn-law; and all felt that they were not settling down with any confidence under the new sliding-scale, while the League was so growing in numbers and dignity as to appear very like a new power in the State. Under these circumstances, the character of the session of 1843 could be easily anticipated. It was chiefly occupied with the condition of the industrial classes.

And here must arise the old difficulty, — the difficulty which is yet unsolved, and which must remain unsolved while our representative system continues imperfect, — the difficulty of determining the true province of legislation in regard to the interests of the industrial classes. This was in fact, though not in words, the one great controversy of the session of 1843, as it may yet be of future sessions. There were not many men in the House, though there were too many men in the country, who were heard to say that it is the business of the government to find employment and food for the people; but there were men of opposite extremes in politics, who contended that it was the duty of government to regulate the interests of the poor, and determine the circumstances of their lives by law. Some high Conservatives contended for this on the ground of the supposed parental character of government, which should watch over the members of the State, as the Church watches over the members of its own communion. As the High-churchmen claimed

dominion, under a metaphor, for Mother-church, while the Church was in fact impersonal, consisting of an aggregate of believers; so our high-statesmen claimed dominion, under a metaphor, for the State as a parent, while the State is, in fact, impersonal, consisting of an aggregate of persons, agreeing, or destined by circumstances, to live under a particular form of government, laws, and customs. With these high Conservatives were joined those members of the Commons who verged most towards democracy, — who claimed a special protection for the poor from government, because the poor were unrepresented in the Legislature. A future Peer, and the Chartist chairman who had conducted torchlight meetings on a Lancashire moor, were seen advocating together a legal regulation of the poor man's labor; while men of intermediate parties advocated the poor man's cause in a directly opposite manner, by contending that his labor is his only property, and that to interfere with it — to restrict its sale by law — is to infringe fatally on the poor man's rights. The truth was — and it is the truth still — there is much to be said on both sides; for the relation between the State and the working-classes in our country is not settled in theory, any more than in practice. It is not only true that the working-classes are unrepresented in the Legislature, but the circulation of labor and the supply of food — now at last free — were so restricted by law as to depress the poor below the level of comfort and the means of education. The Church failed in her duty of educating the people; and the State placed them at disadvantage by restrictive laws. In consequence, a population has grown up, special in its ignorance, its sufferings, and its needs, which must be specially dealt with, if at all. It is impossible to admit, that, under a representative system, it is the proper business of the government to regulate the private interests of any class whatever. It is impossible, under the far higher constitution of humanity, to refuse attention to the case of the depressed, ignorant, and suffering of our people. The only course seems to be to admit, that, as we have not been true to our representative system, — being at this day far from having carried it out, — we cannot be harshly true to its theory. Having permitted a special misery and need to grow up, we must meet it with a special solace and aid. As to how the solace and aid are to be given, — this is the point of difficulty. In the absence of all theory which can command agreement, men must bring themselves into agreement as well as they can under the one guiding principle, that nothing must be done to impair any one's rights as a citizen under a representative system. Every man who is now practically excluded from the benefits of the representative system is to be regarded as destined to inclusion under them; and nothing that

is done for his mind or his fortunes by the grace of the State is to lower him from his position of theoretical citizenship under a constitution which presumes every man's condition and interests to be in his own hands. Whatever names and aspects the debates and legislation of 1843 might assume, they were almost all, in fact, a study of the serious problem of the relation of the State to the poor.

Lord How-
ick's motion. Lord Howick began, on the 13th of February, with a motion for the appointment of a committee of the whole House to consider the distress of the country.¹ He believed, with Dr. Arnold, that the mass of men rarely feel political uneasiness and discontent except under pressure of personal want. He believed that this pressure had now become so terrible and so extensive as to peril our institutions; and he called upon the House to consider and decide whether it was not time for government to interfere. The mode of interference which he desired was the repeal of all restrictions on importation, and especially on that of corn,—it being understood, however, that the mover desired the imposition of the 8s. fixed duty. The real interest of the motion and the debate lay in the certainty that it must elicit from the ministers some declaration of their intentions about the corn-laws; and, in the course of it, Sir R. Peel declared that no proposition about the corn-laws would be brought forward this session. But Mr. Gladstone saved the agricultural interest from any false reliance on the stability of the corn-law, by admitting that the whole question of restriction lay in the extent to which the country was able to bear the application of the principles of free-trade. The opposition members now began, with good reason, to treat the corn-law as a “temporary” expedient, and every thing the Minister said about it as a “temporary” answer.² This was felt by all the Anti-corn-law members to be true; and they, by saying so, not only prepared the way for the total repeal of the corn-law, but prepared the agricultural party to expect it. Lord Howick's motion could not succeed, because it was yet too soon to learn the effects of the great measures of the preceding year. No one could say yet what the income-tax would yield, nor how the timber-trade and other great departments of commerce might be stimulated by the relaxation of duties which had taken place only since October. The majority against the appointment of the committee was 115 in a House of 497.³

The next approach to the great problem was made by Lord Ashley, who moved, on the 28th of February, an address to the Sovereign, praying that she would

¹ Hansard, lxvi. p. 448.

² Hansard, lxvi. p. 490.

³ Hansard, lxvi. p. 887.

immediately and seriously consider what could be done for the religious and moral education of the working-classes.¹ In addition to the difficulties always attending the education question, — difficulties which have been exhibited at a prior period of our history, — there was now one in connection with the peculiar reputation of the mover, both in and out of the House. It had by this time become a sort of custom in Parliament to praise Lord Ashley's philanthropy, and declare expressly a belief that it was unquestionably sincere, — a practice which gave an impression of its being questioned by somebody. The cause of this was, not that Lord Ashley was not a humane man, — not that he spared time and effort to aid the suffering, — but that the direction of his philanthropy was strange and questionable. His residence was in an agricultural county where the laborers were reduced to the lowest condition then known to Englishmen. It was so on his father's estates, — on the estates to which, in the course of nature, he was to succeed: yet he did not take under his protection his nearest neighbors, with whose needs he was, or ought to be, best acquainted; but constituted himself the champion of the Lancashire operatives, whose families had been earning 3*l.* per week, while the peasant families, his neighbors, were earning from 8*s.* to 10*s.* per week, living on food too mean and scanty to support strength, and sleeping under rotten thatch which let in the rain. Lord Ashley was agitating for the personal safety and for the education of the class which was actually the most enlightened, and the best able to take care of itself, of any working-class in England; while the agricultural laborers of his own county were in a state of desperate ignorance and reckless despair, which demanded all his efforts to redress. Knowing nothing of "the manufacturing system," as it was called, he had to depend for information on persons from Lancashire and other mill-districts: and it was notorious that his informants were not always respectable, and that he was largely duped; while he need but have gone into the hovels of his father's peasantry to have seen misery, and mental and moral destitution, which could not be matched in the worst retreats of the manufacturing population. Proofs came to light, from time to time, of the bad character and unjustifiable procedure of Lord Ashley's correspondents and visitors from Lancashire; and it was these things that cast a doubt, — not on the sincerity of his benevolence, but on his right to assume the position of patron of the operatives in Parliament. Amidst all the protestations and complaints which were lavished there, there was a general persuasion of something unsound; that Lord Ashley mistook the

¹ Hansard, lxvii. p. 75.

character of the manufacturing class; that he confounded two orders of social evils,—town evils and factory evils; and that he had much underrated the intelligence and the resources of the factory population. This partly accounts for the uncertain action of the House generally on Lord Ashley's enterprises; while, it need not be said, he was disliked and slightly regarded by the manufacturing interest in the House, as a man who meddled with what he did not understand, and who strove to set aside the great natural laws of society, for the sake of favoring a class who were, above all others of their rank, able to take care of themselves. One anecdote will suffice to indicate the state of feeling which must have existed between Lord Ashley and the economist section of the House. While the final struggle about the corn-law was going forward, a letter was picked up at Lord Ashley's club, which was evidently dropped from his pocket,—it being open, and addressed to him. The waiter who picked it up enclosed it in an envelope, and sent it to the office of the Anti-corn-law League, where it was opened and read as a matter of business, without any suspicion of what it was about. The letter was from a Lancashire correspondent of Lord Ashley's, who wrote that there was no hope of carrying Lord Ashley's measure of that session, but by blackening the character of four mill-firms, whose names were given. These mill-owners happened to be of the very first order,—men who had provided schools for the children of their operatives; who had built model-houses for their people, opened lecture and reading rooms, and baths, and places of recreation; who had spontaneously spent many thousands of pounds in the largest liberality towards their industrial neighbors, and were ordinarily on terms of strong goodwill with them. This letter was discussed by the council of the League; and the question was debated whether Mr. Hume or Mr. Villiers should not be requested to produce this letter in the House, as a specimen of the quality of Lord Ashley's informants from the factory districts. On the whole, it was thought better simply to return the letter to its owner, because, though the League council had come into possession of the document quite innocently, the trick of the club-house waiter might be charged upon them; and the effect of the letter might be destroyed by any disgrace attaching to the act of its production. How Lord Ashley regarded the letter, there was no evidence to show. The proof amounted merely to his being in correspondence with a disreputable informant. But the story discloses the state of feeling existing between him and the economist section of the House, who certainly felt themselves justified in calling upon him to do one of two things,—to apply himself to the redress of the ignorance and woes of the agricul-

tural population, whose abodes lay round about his own, and whose case he could investigate for himself; or to turn over his championship of the factory classes to some member of the House who had that knowledge of the manufacturing districts in which he was deficient.

In 1842, Lord Ashley had brought forward a Bill on behalf of a set of people who really appeared to have been neglected by all mankind, and whose case, when exposed by Lord Ashley, startled Parliament and the country. People who move about above-ground, in the face of day, may exhibit their own case, and hope to have it considered by those who look on; but it now appeared that there was a class moving about underground, in the mines and coal-pits of England and Scotland, whose condition of suffering and brutalization exceeded all that had ever been known, or could be believed. A commission of inquiry, obtained by Lord Ashley, laid open a scene which shocked the whole country. Women were employed as beasts of burden; children were stunted and diseased, beaten, overworked, oppressed in every way; both women and children made to crawl on all-fours in the passages of the pits, dragging carts by a chain passing from the waist between the legs; and all lived in an atmosphere of filth and profligacy which could hardly leave a thought or feeling untainted by vice. This was seen at once to be a special, as well as an extreme case; and a Bill for the relief of the women and children of the colliery population was passed with a rapidity which somewhat injured its quality. It was known that a strong opposition would be raised if the thing were not done at once. It was certain that a multitude of women and children would be thrown out of employment after the passage of the Bill; and not a few persons declared the commissioners' report to be full of exaggeration; and the great permanent objection remained, of the disastrous consequences of interfering with the labor-market. The great majority of the nation, however, felt that it was better to have a large burden thrown on the parishes for a time, than to let such abuses continue; that, making every allowance for exaggeration, the facts were horrible; and that, the labor-market being already interfered with by Factory Bills, this was not the point to stop at. So the Bill passed, with some amendments which Lord Ashley submitted to, rather than wait.¹ By this Bill, women were excluded from mining and colliery labor altogether. Boys were not to be employed under the age of ten years; and the term of apprenticeship was limited. The Secretary of State was empowered to appoint inspectors of mines and collieries, to see that the provisions of the Bill were carried out.

Mines and
Collieries
Act.

¹ Hansard, lxx. p. 1097.

The new law took effect after nine months from its date. The operation has, from time to time, been reported as beneficial; and, though it has been found difficult to prevent women from getting down to work in the pits after the habits of a life had made other employment unsuitable or impossible to them, the pressure upon parish or other charity funds turned out to be less than had been anticipated. It was a great thing to have put a stop to the employment of women in toil wholly unsuited to their frame and their natural duties; and to have broken in upon a system of child-slavery which could never have existed so long in our country, if it had not been hidden in the chambers of the earth.

It was between the passage of this Act and its coming into operation, that Lord Ashley moved to address the Queen on the subject of a religious education for the working-classes; and this brought out from Sir James Graham a statement of a government scheme of education, which was to be engrafted upon a Factory Bill of Lord Ashley's order of legislation, — a law which should control the destinies of the manufacturing population, without touching the more depressed order of agricultural laborers.¹ It was probably owing in part to this, and to the prevalent belief that the government had been stimulated in its action by a fear of Lord Ashley's activity and pertinacity, insufficiently enlightened by philosophy and experience, that the education clauses of Sir James Graham's Factory Bill failed as they did, and that the Dissenters committed themselves against it in a spirit of enmity which lowered their position more than any thing they had done and suffered for a century before.

In order to judge of the government scheme and the opposition to it, it must be remembered with what difficulty any beginning whatever had been made; how jealous was the Church of any admission of Dissenters to the public funds for educational purposes; and how unacceptable to the Dissenters was the idea of compulsory education at all. The difficulty now was, that the proposed compulsory education was to be provided for that class — for the children of the manufacturing districts — where the interest of the Dissenters was strongest; while the agricultural classes — the neglected charge of the Church — were left over for a future measure. It ought to be acknowledged on every hand, that here was a call for magnanimity all round. It was an occasion for the Church to acknowledge her neglect, and hasten to repair it. It was an occasion for the Dissenters to be modest about their much greater exertions for the education of their own members in the

¹ Hansard, lxxvii. p. 422.

large towns, in consideration of the vast deal which it was not in their power to do. It was an occasion for all parties bravely to face the fearful truth of the amount of popular ignorance, and to decide deliberately whether it was best for all to yield some of their desires about doctrinal religious instruction; or for hundreds of thousands of children to pass off into utter darkness, ignorant not only of all religious doctrine whatever, but of the plainest truths and practices of morals. The Church was more equal to the occasion than the Dissenters. The Church yielded more than she had ever offered before to the consciences of Dissenters; and, when the Dissenters threw out the educational part of the government scheme, the Church set vigorously to work to raise funds by voluntary subscriptions, for the extension and improvement of the National-Church schools. Whatever may be thought of the quality of the education given in those schools, indisputable proof was afforded in the exertions of the Church during 1843, of the earnestness of the desire of the Church for the education of the people, as she conceived of education. The Dissenters at the same time appear to have erred,—naturally perhaps, but widely and fatally. In their fear of “compromise,”—a fear usually so honorable and so wise,—they forgot that this was a case in which loss of time was fatal. They had been right hitherto in rejecting measures of religious liberty which had any thing unsound in them,—in waiting from year to year for a perfect Marriage Bill, for instance, rather than put up with a partial one; but, in the present case, every year of delay removed thousands of children beyond the reach of education, and thus consigned them to risks and injury immeasurably more fatal than any kind or degree of religious error could possibly have been. Some of the Dissenters saw and felt this, and perceived it to be their duty to take the most liberal scheme they could obtain in the first place, try to enlarge it afterwards, and continue to prosecute their voluntary efforts as before, so as to make the government measure a supplement to their own exertions, instead of a substitute for them. This, however, required a magnanimity of which all were not capable: and the large majority of the Dissenters were led away to over-rate the extent and quality of the education they could impart; to overlook the large area where they could not work at all; and to disregard or deny the great truth that the voluntary principle is inapplicable to education, because it is precisely those who need education most that are least capable of demanding it, desiring it, and even conceiving of it. The opposition of the Dissenters prevailed. The opportunity was lost of taking the Church in a genial and liberal mood, and of providing for the children of various sects being reared as brethren, while instructed each in the doctrine

of his own communion. All that was possible was done for the perpetuating of sectarian rancor, and for hounding on ignorance and bigotry to new assaults on the innocence and peace of society. By this mistake, it is now pretty well understood that the Dissenters lost more in character and influence than they can regain in a long course of years; and, with all their large promises, sincere but rash, they have done nothing effectual in the way of substitution for the measure they rejected.

The outline of the government measure was this. Factory children had been legislated for before, as we have seen; and, as was anticipated, such legislation had been inoperative.¹ It was now proposed that factory children between the ages of eight and thirteen should not work for more than six hours and a half per day; that they should be obliged to attend schools provided for the purpose; the children of Churchmen, Catholics, and Dissenters, being committed, for certain appointed hours in every week, to the charge of their respective pastors, for religious instruction according to the creed of their parents. The measure was enlarged so as to include all pauper children in the towns, and all other children whose parents would consent to their entering the schools. Thus the larger proportion of children then uneducated was provided for; and a promise was held out of an extension of the system to include the neglected part of the agricultural population in a short time. As there was nothing here which need interfere with any existing schools, and as the most careful provision was made for the equality within the schools of children of all sects, there would really have been nothing for the Dissenters to protest against if it had not been for the trusteeship provision. There were to be seven trustees to each school under the Act; four of whom were to be elective, but the other three must be the clergyman of the district and two churchwardens. This would almost necessarily yield a majority of Church trustees over Dissenters; but, as it is difficult to see how any freer arrangement could be offered in a society where an Established Church exists at all, the opposition to it amounted to a declaration that there should be no general scheme of education in co-existence with an establishment; and the prospect of popular education was postponed to the day when the Church should be overthrown as an establishment.

Within the House, all went well. Lord J. Russell, while offering some few objections, gave the scheme his hearty support as a whole; and men of all faiths and parties showed themselves disposed to concede what was necessary to the accomplishment of the object. The Queen's reply to the address was cordial.² But presently the Dissenters were up and stirring in opposition;

¹ Hansard, lxxvii. p. 422.

² Hansard, lxxvii. p. 354.

and their speeches at public meetings, and the language of some of their petitions evinced a misconception of the measure which showed that it was doomed. The remainder of the session would not suffice for disabusing those who had been so unaccountably misled about the facts of the measure. An inquirer here and there had the curiosity to ascertain how many, of all the alarmed Dissenters he was acquainted with, had seen the Bill, or learned for themselves what its provisions really were; and scarcely an instance was found of any one having obtained his information at first hand. It was a case of panic; and the result was shown in circulars full of misstatements, in public meetings full of violence, and in the presentation of such a mass of petitions against the Bill as had never been seen in modern times. On the 1st of May, Sir James Graham brought forward explanations and some important amendments, enlarging the number of trustees, and so altering the wording of the Bill as to make clear the entire independence of the children of different sects, in regard to religious instruction and worship.¹ But it was useless to explain and concede. Nearly 200 petitions against the Bill were presented by one member in one day; and Lord J. Russell was charged with one from the city of London, signed by 55,000 persons. On the 15th of June, Sir James Graham announced, with deep regret, that the government felt itself compelled to give up the educational clauses of the Bill; and, on the 19th, he proposed to carry forward the rest of the measure.² Educational clauses withdrawn.

At the beginning of the next session, accordingly, Sir James Graham introduced a Factory Bill, divested of the education clauses; and it was the fate of this Bill New Bill. which indicated the uncertain mind and temper of the House in regard to Lord Ashley's philanthropic enterprises. When this Bill went into committee, Lord Ashley moved a clause by which the working-day for women and young persons was reduced from twelve to ten hours.³ In the course of his speech, he made statements which showed that he did not understand the nature of the labor employed in the cotton manufacture any more than the great natural laws which regulate labor and production.⁴ In this speech, he went too far for the government, as well as the economist party, though he was supported by the many who indulge feeling at the expense of reason, and in indolence of thought, — by the same sort of men as formerly strove to regulate wages, food, and dress by Act of Parliament. Sir James Graham opposed him with pain, seeing how the very subsistence of two millions of people was concerned in any legislation which

¹ Hansard, lxxviii. p. 1103.

³ Hansard, lxxii. p. 277.

² Hansard, lxxix. p. 1568.

⁴ Hansard, lxxiii. pp. 1073-1101.

should tamper with the cotton manufacture, — that great branch of industry which had been introduced under a system of freedom from parliamentary interference.¹ Sir James Graham not only saw this as an economist, but he felt his responsibility as Secretary for the Home Department, in regard to any legislative interference which might affect the maintenance of two millions of people. He saw the consequences of abridging “by one-sixth the whole period allowed for the replacement of capital and the production of profit;” and he would not venture the risk of a corresponding reduction of the wages of the work-people. The men must stop work when the women and boys stopped; and such a legislative interference with the natural course of manufacture was not to be adventured for any reasons which had been alleged. The thing to be done was clear to his mind, — to educate the people, so as to enable them to take care of their one great property, their labor; and not to deprive them by law of the disposal of that, their only property. To provide by law leisure and opportunity for children to be educated was one thing; to stop the labor of working-men by restricting the labor of their wives was another: and he must oppose all interference which was, in fact, tyranny under the name of humanity. These were also the views of Sir R. Peel; and the government was considered so far pledged against Lord Ashley’s motion, as that the majority of nine which he obtained at first was considered a serious defeat.²

There was a hope still. When the eighth clause came to be discussed, Lord Ashley would have to move the substitution of ten hours for twelve; and government would proceed that far with the Bill, in hope that the House would reconsider this important matter. When the time came, the House voted in a way which showed that it did not understand the business before it. There was a majority of three against the proposal of twelve hours; and then, immediately after, a majority of seven against ten hours.³ Sir James Graham said, that, as the House would not consent to the term of either ten or twelve hours, the government must take time to consider what could be done next. The result was that Lord Ashley gave way, permitting government to withdraw the Bill, and bring in another, which was the same in all respects, except that it contained no clause specifying the hours of labor. On the third reading of the new Bill, Lord Ashley moved that the hours of labor should be restricted to eleven per day for three years from the next October, and to ten from that time forward.⁴ The debate reads strangely to any one familiar with the life and lot of the working-

¹ Hansard, lxxiii. pp. 1101–1110.

³ Hansard, lxxiii. pp. 1460–1463.

² Hansard, lxxiii. p. 1263.

⁴ Hansard, lxxiv. p. 915.

classes. A multitude of the operatives who had petitioned for a ten-hour Bill had been tempted by the placards which were seen all over Manchester: "Less work. More wages. Sign for ten hours." But now the ten-hour men in the House talked glibly of the way in which the inevitable reduction of wages would be compensated by moral advantages; and of the ease with which Parliament could retrace its steps, if the reduction should be found to go too far. The opponents of this rash and meddling legislation declared themselves appalled at the prospect of diminished wages, of which their opponents talked so lightly, and about which they desired to leave the working-class no choice; and it was pointed out, that, if the step was retraced, it would be on account of the fatality — which would then have become irreparable — of the loss of our foreign trade. Sooner than this could happen, however, as experienced men felt and said, the law would be evaded, and, by some means or other, practically set aside; for no law could work in defiance of the needs of capitalists and laborers: and then we should have perpetrated the unspeakable mischief of breaking a solemn promise to the people, and teaching them to despise the law and distrust the law-makers. The debate ended in a majority of 138 against the ten-hour limitation; and the Bill was passed by the Commons with only seven dissentient voices.¹ It was not much discussed in the Lords; and it presently became law.

Decision
against the
ten-hour
clause

In the next session, 1845, Lord Ashley introduced two Bills, which were taken up and carried by the government; one bringing young people employed in print-works under the protection of the factory measure, and the other providing for the better care of lunatics.² This last was a good step taken in an unquestionable cause. As for the factory legislation, it is almost as melancholy to witness the efforts made to cure the evils of our overwrought competitive system as to contemplate the evils themselves. First, we have allowed our operative population to grow up in less ignorance than some other classes, it is true, but with a wholly insufficient knowledge of their own condition and liabilities. They have overcrowded the labor-market, so as to be compelled to work harder, not than other classes of laborers who earn smaller wages, but than is good for anybody to labor; and then we try to mend the matter by forbidding them to sell more than a given amount of their labor. It is not thus that the excessive competition which is the cause of the mischief can be reduced; and the true friends of the working freeman felt that he lost nothing, while he retained his liberty, by the failure of Lord Ashley's ten-hour measures of 1844.

¹ Hansard, lxxiv. p. 1104.

² Hansard, lxxvii. p. 638; lxxxix. p. 180.

Lord Ashley wrought in a better direction when he heartily seconded Mr. Charles Buller's motion, in the session of 1843, in favor of extensive and systematic colonization, as a means of lessening the excessive competition in the labor-market at home, and of opening new fields of subsistence and of commerce, to the mutual advantage of the colonists and of the stayers-at-home.¹ Though the discussion did not lead to any immediate practical result, it was eminently useful in directing attention to the true principles of relief, and affording large information as to our colonizing prospects. We shall hereafter see what was doing in this field.

While Parliament was thus almost exclusively occupied with beneficent legislation, and what was intended as such,—thus indicating the peculiar pressure of the time,—society out of doors was following in the same track. We see with great satisfaction, about this time, a rising movement in favor of shortening the hours of trading in shops. Here, where exchange and not production is concerned, there can be no reasonable objection to bringing the exhausting labor of shop attendance within endurable limits. As long as the fair convenience of purchasers is considered, and the shops are kept open for the length of an average working-day, a timely closing of the shops is a benefit to the tradesman and his assistants in every way. The one thing to be done was to induce the tradesmen in the same line to agree to close their shops at the same hour; and this has been found not difficult on the whole. The early-closing movement began to be talked about at this time; and a prospect was opening to the shopman and shopwoman of evening reading or social converse or rest, or, if their fatigue permitted it, a breath of fresh air at other times than on Sundays. And we note also the commencement of the movement on behalf of one of the most suffering classes of society,—the governesses. The position of this unfortunate class is so anomalous, so unnatural, and, at our own particular period, so depressed, that the efforts of all the benevolent among us could do but little for relief. But, from this time, it was at least certain that the neglect of society was at an end; and this was the clear beginning of the end which must one day arrive. From this time, some few of the suffering multitude of female educators would be sheltered in their latter years, and tended in sickness, and aided to provide resources against a season of age and sickness. We were to have among us asylums for aged governesses, and homes for such as were unemployed; and methods of insurance or deposit for annuities for such as were earning salaries; and, better than all these, an awakening of society to

¹ Hansard, lxxviii. p. 484.

the inquiry why this class is one which suffers so bitterly, and whether it can be justifiable to have among us a class so indispensable, and yet so unhappy. It may be hoped that there were employers of governesses who were now moved to consider whether they could not afford some solace of sympathy, and respect and social converse, and improvement and amusement, to the inmate of their house whose position was one of utter loneliness in the midst of numbers.

We notice at this time also projects for improving the dwellings of the poor. We read of model lodging-houses, — of mansions for families, where, at a less cost than had ^{Improvement of dwellings.} been paid for the most wretched roosting-places, poor families might be provided with clean and airy rooms, with a supply of water, light, and warmth. Suggestions were even made of a common kitchen, wash-house, and bakehouse, and other devices of domestic Socialism, which made the timid look to see whether the principle of Communism was gaining ground in England, as it was reported to be in France, Germany, and Italy. The greater number felt, however, that it mattered little what name such projects were called by, if they supplied the necessaries and comforts of life, on a principle independent of almsgiving, to those who could enjoy them only by means of the economy of association.

The Queen's letter was still looked to as a means of relief for the still starving people in the manufacturing districts. ^{The Queen's letter.} This royal letter was prepared by the advice, and under the eye, of the Privy Council. It was addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury; and it directed that the bishops should see that it was read on an appointed Sunday, in all the churches, that the people might be moved to charitable contribution for the relief of the distress, — their contributions to be collected from house to house in the course of the week following the publication of the letter.¹ The transaction, which began in May, 1842, was spread over some months, — Lord Wharnccliffe declaring, in the next session, that the sum raised under this letter amounted to about 75,000*l*, which was expended in the most distressed manufacturing counties.² It was thought to be a mistake at the time to have recourse to so extreme a method of appeal in a season when all hearts that could be so reached were already opened and softened by the indications of unequalled distress on every hand; and the smallness of the sum raised in response to the royal invitation, in proportion to those provided by private subscription, seems to show that there was a failure of judgment and taste in the act. But it combines with other incidents of the time to show that the great social tendency of

¹ Hansard, lxxiii. p. 767.

² Hansard, lxxvi. p. 766.

the day was to consider the poor. This consideration occupied almost all the time of Parliament, and was most prominent in the thought of the country,—eminently combining with and stimulating the action of the most powerful body in the community at that time,—the Anti-corn-law League.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN January, 1841, Mr. O'Connell said, at a meeting of the Repeal Association of Dublin: "I shall, for my part, ^{Movement in} vote for the Whigs on all party questions, in order to ^{Ireland.} keep them in: but I tell them, honestly and openly, that they have lost altogether the hearts of the Irish people; and nothing but the loud cry for repeal shall henceforth be heard among us. . . . I did not resume the repeal agitation till I saw how utterly unable the Whigs were to effect any thing."¹ It might be asked why Mr. O'Connell desired to keep in the Whigs, if they had lost the hearts of the Irish people, and were utterly powerless. It appears that he really did suppose, that a Conservative Ministry — such as the Peel Administration was by anticipation supposed to be — would treat Ireland as the rank old Orangemen of the north would have her treated; and that the alternative was merely between nothing being done for Ireland, and her being cruelly oppressed. Just before the bed-chamber dispute, when it was known that Sir R. Peel might come in at any moment if he would, and that it was the "Irish difficulty" which prevented his doing so, Mr. O'Connell was looking round anxiously for every means of making the Irish question popular in England, — even requesting an English author, whom he thought likely to be listened to, to travel in Ireland, under facilities provided by himself, in order to report upon the condition of the country. His apprehension of insufferable coercion from a Conservative government was probably real; and it led him, from this date, into that monstrous agitation for the repeal of the Union which was as fatal to himself as to his unhappy country. From this time, he began to reap his retribution for his rash, unprincipled, and most mischievous political conduct. From this time, he drew down upon himself a burden of embarrassment and irksome responsibility, under which, after long perplexity and anguish of mind, he sank spirit-broken and terror-stricken, leaving a name which was soon to be cursed by his countrymen as fervently as it had ever been blessed. Probably, no one now supposes him to have been sincere in any expectation

¹ Spectator, 1841, p. 3.

or desire to obtain a repeal of the Union; for nothing can be more futile, or more audacious in absurdity, than his replies to Lord Charlemont and others who objected to the efficacy of repeal, and showed, that, if it was obtained to-morrow, the redemption of Ireland would remain to be achieved, with less chance of unity of councils and dispassionateness of action than under the imperial connection; but he was probably of opinion that the best means of making Ireland attended to and cared for was by making her feared, and that the best way of making her feared was by pushing the repeal agitation.¹

In this year, we find him waging war against British manufacturers. "His pantaloons, waistcoat, and coat were O'Connell's proceedings. Irish. . . . He considered the pleasure of giving employment to Irish hands part of the value of the price he gave for any thing." He might speak for himself; but he could not expect poorer Irishmen to indulge themselves in this sort of luxury: and the effort to exclude English manufactures failed, though O'Connell passed a law to that effect, and even attempted to enforce it, in opposition to the Dublin magistracy.² Mr. O'Connell made journeys and attended dinners for the furtherance of repeal; and, in February, we find him declaring that he had been refused post-horses through Orange intimidation: from which fact he drew the conviction, that, if he had travelled on the day first fixed, his carriage would have certainly been destroyed, and himself probably murdered.³ In March, at a meeting on the Curragh of Kildare, he protested against a published calculation of the length of his agitation, from his age being sixty-five. "Ten or eleven of his uncles and aunts lived to be above ninety;" and the prospect of his scope of agitation was indefinite, as he "could make as much of three years as most men could of thirty." In April, we find him holding forth on the grievous subject of rents, and proposing plans, procured from a committee of his own, for securing a tenancy of not less than twenty years for every man on the land, with power to all to purchase small farms, paying for them by instalments, with the rent.⁴ At the same date, he admitted the difficulty of enforcing his order to exclude British manufactures, and accounted for it by audaciously declaring that it was owing to an influx of English workmen, "who had come over to keep down the wages of the Irish operative." In the same month, certain American sympathizers sent over some hundreds of pounds for the furtherance of the repeal cause; and O'Connell declared that the Irish Parliament was not dead, — only slept, — and would be awakened now by the crowing of the American cocks across the Atlantic.⁵

¹ Spectator, 1841, p. 28.

² Spectator, 1841, p. 29.

³ Spectator, p. 272.

⁴ Spectator, p. 344.

⁵ Spectator, p. 392.

He took occasion to stimulate the repeal wardens to augment their funds, saying that two millions of repealers—and he could not do with less than two millions of repealers—would yield, at 1s. per man, 100,000*l.* By this time, O'Connell's "Board of Trade" had discovered that it would be necessary to supersede the Dublin shopkeepers by "marts for the exclusive sale of Irish commodities," as the shopkeepers would not join in the movement to exclude British manufactures. By the middle of May, it had become clear that Sir R. Peel was coming into power; and O'Connell proposed a simultaneous meeting, on a Sunday, of all the parishes of Ireland, in order to implore the Queen, "not to receive into her confidence the bitter and malignant ancient enemies of her faithful Irish people."¹ Before this month was over, the repeal meetings in the provinces were becoming grand shows,—one on the hill of Kilnoe, in Clare, consisting of 100,000 men; and another at Ardsullas, leading the way in that organization which afterwards gave their formidable character to such meetings. The people came in companies, led by their priests, from distances of ten or fifteen miles, with temperance bands playing before them.² A bedridden old woman was carried ten miles to see the preparations made "for the salvation of her country." During the absorption of the passions of the people in the growing agitation, the diminution of crime appears remarkable. While there was "but one voice upon the breeze of heaven,—‘Hurrah for repeal!’"—and the shout arose "from the Giants' Causeway to Cape Clear, from Connemara to the Hill of Howth,"—the judges were congratulating the juries on there being few prisoners for trial, or "the dock was empty." In August, the liberator's speeches contain a curious medley: announcing his intended measure for securing to every man a long or perpetual holding of the land he lives on; desiring the people not to rebel as long as they could help it; intimating that steamboats could bring aid from America in ten days; and longing for the hour, which he declared might soon arrive, when the Queen, flying from the Tory enemies of her throne, should take refuge in the arms of her faithful Irish.³ To these he added two curious declarations,—that he had always been opposed to the introduction of a poor-law into Ireland; and that he had arranged to introduce hand-loom weaving into Ireland, trusting to achieve an exclusion of the productions of British power-looms. By this time, the repeal meetings were "immense;" and the priests of one diocese which contained 105 had all joined but one. A member was now added to the Association, whose accession was uproariously hailed,—Mr. O'Connell's latest grandchild, aged four days. Nothing was omitted which could amuse or

¹ Spectator, p. 466.² Spectator, p. 582.³ Spectator, 1841, p. 749.

gratify the people. In October, the government papers in London intimated plainly, that the Cabinet intended to take no notice of any nonsense in Ireland, but that any acts obviously dangerous to the general peace would be put down with the strong hand; and an appeal was made to the newspaper press on the Conservative side not to record the boasts and menaces of the repealers, as nothing but neglect seemed to be necessary to empty the benches at repeal meetings. This declaration of the "Standard," in October, 1841, was regarded as an indication of the policy of the new Administration in regard to the repeal movement. Mr. O'Connell had before declined the office of Lord Mayor of Dublin. He now changed his mind, and accepted the dignity, for the facilities it would afford for extending the repeal cause. In November, the movement had become important enough to be visited with opposition and defection.¹ A prominent member withdrew, convinced by the arguments of opponents that Ireland wanted peace and quiet more than political changes; and an intrepid parish priest refused to collect repeal rent from his flock, because they were already under the pressure of poverty. By this time, the new census was out; and Mr. O'Connell made use of it to charge upon the British government a "wholesale extermination of the Irish people," — "a frightful slaughter of human beings," — because the population had increased at a considerably slower rate during the last than the preceding ten years. At every meeting in Dublin now, contributions from the United States were handed in, amounting by this time to many hundreds of pounds. The O'Connell rent was also swelling, — the sum collected in the Dublin district alone this year exceeding 2000*l*. In a month, it became clear how the new Lord Mayor meant to use his office for the benefit of the repeal cause. In one hour and a half he admitted seventy-three new freemen, — all of them having avouched themselves Catholics, and "of the right sort."² The dignitary declared the business to be "going on swimmingly;" and that there would be no need for him to be made permanent Lord Mayor by perpetual re-election, because he could put things in train during this year, and get a sound co-adjutor appointed to succeed him, who would do the same in his turn. Such avowals appear to have created no disgust among his followers, amidst their loud talk of political right and justice. All means to their end seem to have been, not only fair, but laudable in their eyes. These preparations indicate what might be expected from a subsequent time.

In 1842, however, there was something like a suspension of the repeal agitation. The harvest having been bad, the people suffered cruelly in many of the rural districts. Food riots and

¹ Spectator, p. 1109.

² Spectator, p. 1157.

agrarian disturbances fill the foreground of the picture during that year,—attacks upon flour-mills; people roaming the streets in the towns of Galway, and collecting before every potato store-house; lives lost at Ennis; and a special commission sent down to scenes of disturbance. The next year was that in which the repeal agitation reached its height.

It is at this time that we begin to see mention of “monster meetings.” Early in January, Mr. O’Connell announced the repeal of the Union to be “all but immediate,” if the clergy and laity would unite in their overwhelming majority; and he added, “1843 is and shall be the repeal year.” A remarkable step, and one which created great excitement in Dublin, was, that Mr. O’Connell carried a repeal petition to Parliament by an overwhelming majority in the corporation of Dublin.¹ This was in March; and presently occurred the monster meeting at Trim, where 30,000 people were present. At the dinner which succeeded the meeting, the agitator ventured upon his boldest language; talked of the scaffold, victory or the grave; and dared the young men to say whether they would be slaves, or shed their blood in the field. At the Mullingar meeting, on the 14th of May, it appeared that every Catholic bishop in Ireland was a repealer.² To this meeting the peasantry thronged, even from a distance of forty miles; and the numbers were somewhere between 100,000 and 130,000. By this time, all pretence of assembling to petition Parliament was laid aside; and Parliament was spoken of with mere contempt. As the government did not interfere, the agitator grew bolder and more threatening in his language, and more plainly invited his followers to wrest repeal from the hand of imperial tyranny. The government still professed its intention of relying on the ordinary powers of the law, except with regard to the holding of arms, about which a keenly contested Bill passed through Parliament during the summer. The Chancellor of Ireland, Sir Edward Sugden, removed from the commission of the peace Lord Ffrench and several other magistrates who had taken part in repeal demonstrations; but this act, however much questioned in the House of Commons, was one which lay within the ordinary powers of the law.

It appears as if the first serious fears of the government were excited by the monster meeting at Tara, on the 15th of August, where O’Connell, who provoked the old association of ideas about the bully and the coward, bragged more grandly than ever, because it seemed that the government would give him nothing to fear. He declared that he had been laughed at for saying in January that this was the repeal year:

¹ Spectator, 1843, p. 28.

² Annual Regi

but it was his turn to laugh now ; for it was certain, that, before twelve months more, the Parliament would be in College Green, Dublin.¹ He believed he was “able to announce” to his hearers, that not twelve months could possibly elapse without hurrahs for the Irish Parliament in College Green being heard over the land. He opened glimpses of his plan for extorting permission from the Queen for Ireland to govern herself ; and these words were addressed to an assemblage estimated, by various reporters, at from 500,000 to 2,000,000 of persons. The hill of Tara was like a huge encampment. Some persons arrived overnight ; others flocked in from the break of day ; and, after ten o'clock, imposing processions, with music and banners, converged from various points.² The spot was chosen for its revolutionary associations, — the old kings of Ireland having been elected on the hill ; and the rebels of 1798 having there sustained a defeat. A head-ornament, half cap, half crown, was prepared, wherewith to crown the liberator ; and there can be no doubt that the peasant-multitude believed the day to be come when they were to be freed from a foreign domination, and restored to national grandeur, and universal comfort and well-being. This appears to have been the occasion — at the dinner after the meeting —

Arbitration
courts.

when the scheme of establishing arbitration courts was first recommended. The people were advised to desert and ignore the courts of law ; and the magistrates who were dismissed from the commission of the peace on account of their repeal opinions were to serve as O'Connell's justices, and decide on all disputes brought before them. These arbitration courts did actually, for a considerable time, almost supersede the regular tribunals. Of course, the plan could not work long ; and there was, perhaps, no part of the repeal agitation, except the temperance, that the friends of the Irish liked so well. It encouraged peace and courtesy, — checked the litigious, — and would probably act in the very beneficial direction of giving the people some better notion than they had before of the use and value of law. As the decisions of O'Connell's justices were not legal, their courts could not long exist ; and the practice of arbitration died out, like all the liberator's arrangements.

On Sunday, the 20th of August, another monster meeting was held at Roscommon, — less numerous than it would have been if the tenantry of some landlords had not complained to their landlords that their attendance would be compulsory if they had not protection in staying away.³ Troops and police were stationed within call, but out of sight. The agitator's tone was very warlike. After calling “teetotalism the finest effluence of human

¹ Annual Register, 1843, p. 231.

² Spectator, 1843, p. 801.

³ Spectator, 1843, p. 777.

virtue," he said, that, "if he had to go to battle," he should have the teetotalers with him; and there was not an army in the world that he would not fight with them.¹ Two days afterwards, a scheme was produced which amused and occupied the repealers, and made them think that something was doing,—a plan of O'Connell's proposed Irish Parliament. In this there was an elaborate-looking detail of the populations of Irish towns and counties, with an apportionment of representatives; and there was something for the people to do in studying this; but there was no hint given as to how this Parliament was to be procured. When pressed on that point, the agitator declared, that the Queen would grant this Parliament by proclamation; and then the Parliament would "legalize every thing." This is all. The most careful search into the records of the time yields nothing more; not a trace of a practical plan, political or military; not a particle of evidence that O'Connell was really seeking a repeal of the Union. Unwilling as every one must be to suppose that a man so able and powerful was in fact hoaxing an anxious and suffering people for a course of years; diverting them from the benefits of the imperial connection to follow false lights; seducing them from peaceful industry to rove the country in a bitter holiday fashion,—it is impossible for the careful inquirer to avoid the conviction, that O'Connell knew that there would be no repeal of the Union. We find marchings hither and thither, temperance-bands, Tara-crowns, "purple robes with fur,"—all regal,—oaths and pledges, flattery of the worst parts of the Irish character, pernicious excitement of hatreds of race, paper-schemes and impromptu laws, and an ardent and unremitting pushing of the demand for money; but, with all this, no word spoken or written, no act done, no purpose peeping out, which shows any practical intent of procuring repeal.

At this harvest-time, a new method of aiding the cause began to be practised. On O'Connell promising fixity of ^{Anti-rent} tenure—virtual possession—to every holder of land, ^{movement.} in case of an Irish Parliament once assembling in Dublin, the Catholic Bishop of Armagh and other priests began to give "warning" that the people would, sooner or later, refuse to pay their rents. The warning was precisely one which was likely to work its own fulfilment; and we find the priests here and there preaching to their flocks that they should gather in their harvests, lay by what they wanted for themselves, and then, if any was left, they might pay it over for rent.² As an improvement upon this, bands of strangers now appeared from a distance,—two hundred of one party on a Sunday morning,—and cut and carried the produce of small farms, bringing cars with them for

¹ Spectator, 1843, p. 800.

² Spectator, 1843, p. 872.

the purpose, and leaving the tenant to show his landlord his bare fields as excuse for non-payment of his rent. These collusive thefts, perpetrated in open day, and amidst the sympathy of the neighborhood, are among the worst features of the time. Another was the coercion used to raise money for the cause; the reapers at this harvest being required to produce their repeal-tickets — receipts for a shilling — before they could obtain work. “If O’Connell knew,” said one of these reapers, who was walking back from Meath to Drogheda, with blistered feet, to fetch his repeal-ticket, — “if O’Connell knew what a comfort a shilling is to our families, he would let us alone.” This was said just at the time when the Queen, in the House of Lords, was expressing her sorrow for the injury caused to the Irish people by the seditious efforts of the agitators of the day.¹ She was resolved to sustain the Union, and was endeavoring to preserve the tranquillity of Ireland by the use of the ordinary powers of the law; being unwilling to resort to measures of coercion, and feeling assured that she might rely on the co-operation of a multitude of faithful subjects in Ireland. Mr. O’Connell pronounced this speech to be “an excess of impudence and stupidity combined;” but, perhaps aware that it might appear ludicrous for an O’Connell to accuse Queen Victoria of “impudence,” he laid all the blame on Her Majesty’s ministers. The

Irish-arms
Act.

ministers had carried one coercive measure during the session, — the Irish-arms Act, — by which the possessors of arms were obliged to register them, to have them branded by the appointed government officer, and take out a license for holding them. This act was brought forward at the request of a large number of orderly inhabitants of Ireland, who were compelled, by the state of the times, to keep arms enough for their own defence, but dreaded a seizure of them. There was little difference between this Bill and many which had passed for a long course of years, — even up to the date of Lord Morpeth’s Bill of 1838; but it was made the ground of party conflict in the House. The debates were long and angry; and every conceivable Irish topic was brought into them. The Bill, which had been first debated on the 29th of May, did not leave the Commons till the 9th of August. The Lords passed it rapidly; and it became law on the 22d of the same month.² It afforded a great subject to the agitator at the meetings.

But, by this time, two sorts of narratives of those meetings were getting abroad. According to the repealers themselves, the whole country was up, in one flame of patriotism, on occasion of a monster meeting, — decorating houses and roads, carrying the crown-cap of the liberator, marching with solemn determination,

¹ Hansard, lxxi. p. 1009.

² Hansard, lxxi. p. 470.

as to a battle-field, bearing banners which demanded "Repeal or blood," and swearing on the ground to lay down their lives for the cause, in response to O'Connell's voice, which was heard to the bounds of the assemblage.¹ On the other hand, it was pointed out, that no human voice could make its utterance heard by 100,000 people; the decorations were denied; the banners had not been seen; the people went to the stubble-field or hill smiling and chatting, as to a mere sight; and, when there, they waited only for the arrival of O'Connell, when, having nothing more to stay for, they poured off in all directions, leaving a few hundreds within reach of the voices from the platform, to do the business of listening, feeling, and responding by cheers. There were, besides, Conservative reports which treated the movement with a contempt as absurd and forced as the exaggerations of the repealers. The government acted on the statements of the repealers themselves, who now talked of marshalling their "troops," and of their "repeal cavalry;" and issued "regulations," in order to "muster-march, and parade." A monster meeting Clontarf
meeting. was appointed to be held at Clontarf, three miles from Dublin, on Sunday, the 8th of October; and the preparations assumed such a military air, that the government thought it time to interfere. On the 7th, about the middle of the day, a proclamation by the Viceroy and Privy Council was issued, which declared the public peace to be endangered by such practices as had taken place at late repeal meetings, and were contemplated now; warned all persons to abstain from attendance at the Clontarf meeting; and enjoined all official persons to be aiding in the suppression of the meeting.² The agitator called together *his* council; spoke "with marked calmness;" announced that, in consequence of the proceedings of the government, there would be no meeting the next day; and entreated all persons to use their influence in preventing any assemblage. The association issued a proclamation, desiring the people to stay at home; and a large number of members volunteered to station themselves on the approaches to Clontarf, to turn back all comers. Early in the morning, the main strength of the garrison of Dublin was so placed on the field, as that all who arrived found themselves in a narrow lane between soldiers, and compelled to pass on by the pressure from behind. Nobody could find out where the hustings were: they had been removed in the night. Nobody could see O'Connell: he stayed away. Instead of him, there was seen Thomas Steele, "the head-pacificator of Ireland," waving a green bough of peace, and moving over the ground, crying, "Home — home — home!"

Of course, O'Connell declared now, that this Clontarf meeting

¹ Northern Whig, October, 1843.

² Annual Register, 1843, p. 234.

was to have been the last; and, of course, this was not believed by those who had charge of the public peace. Not only was there no reason why the agitator should stop at this particular meeting, but the government had sound reasons for thinking that he would not. It now appears that he was in a difficulty which had begun to weigh upon him, and under which he afterwards lost spirits and courage. He had called out the people, and now did not know what to do with them. He had accustomed them to political demonstrations as shows; and he must devise novelties to keep them amused and peaceable. It was probably an act of mercy in the government to stop him at this point of embarrassment. It is certain that his anxiety about keeping the peace was not surpassed by their own, when the affair had reached its present critical stage. Amidst the sudden hush of dismay, caused by the Clontarf proclamation throughout Dublin, O'Connell went about with an air of extreme calmness, and with an expression of countenance, which, in unguarded moments, showed that his mind was now really harassed,—no doubt by the pressing necessity of immediately striking out a new course.

In England, almost everybody was relieved and pleased that government had at last interfered with a procedure which was wholly incompatible with public peace and order under an established government. It had been observed that Cabinet meetings had become frequent within a week; and that the Viceroy, Lord De Grey, had repaired hastily to Dublin from London, instead of travelling into Yorkshire as had been planned. It had long been a question among men of all parties why O'Connell remained unchecked; and now that he proposed to muster his "repeal cavalry" within three miles of the Irish capital, no one could say that the time for a check had not fully come. Why the thing was done hastily at last, so that the notice against assembling was perilously short, appears never to have been fully explained. It is probable that some secret information reached the government, which precipitated their measures.

On the Monday, O'Connell's words were watched for at the meeting of the Repeal Association. One of his topics was the cruelty of government in keeping the soldiers standing all day at Clontarf for nothing. He quizzed the Viceroy, and complimented the soldiery and the people. He talked of simultaneous meetings all over Ireland, and of plans for buying up debts on Irish estates by an association of gentlemen: but these things were to be done hereafter, at some distant and unfixed time; and no indication appears of his having decided on any immediate course.¹ He spoke of laying before the House of Commons, in the first week of the session, his scheme for an Irish Parliament;

¹ Spectator, 1843, p. 965.

but made no reference to his late declaration, that 1843 was the great repeal year. It was now the 9th of October, and no progress had been made. There had been nothing but talk and show; and the educated people of Ireland, the great middle class, were as hostile as ever to repeal. The peasantry were the repeal host. They were truly formidable, on account of their sanguinary notions about slaying all the soldiers in the barracks, and massacring all the Saxons in the island, so that every true Irishman should "have wheaten bread next year;" but they could not assist in the first step,—forming a plan for obtaining repeal.

For a few days, Dublin was full of rumors of the arrest of O'Connell, though his portly form was daily seen in the streets.¹ On the 14th, the rumor was true. He, ^{Arrest of repeal leaders.} his son, and eight of their co-adjutors, were arrested on charges of conspiracy, sedition, and unlawful assembling. They were admitted to bail. This was the turning-point of O'Connell's life. It was at once observed that his anxiety for the public peace was extreme. His language became moderate; or, whenever it swelled into vehemence, it was from an evident agony of apprehension lest the multitude whom he had inflamed should break out into the violence which he had before indicated to them. Those who should know best have since declared that from this time his health began to fail; and that the word "prison" caused him an anguish which he could not conceal. He issued the most imploring and incessant entreaties to the people to keep perfectly quiet; and declared that he would never again use the term "Saxon," as he found that it gave offence.² He caught at an offer from Mr. Joseph Sturge, of Birmingham, to aid the repeal cause, if he would confine his demand to a local legislature for merely local purposes, and would unite the British demand for universal suffrage with his own objects.

The proceedings began on the 2d of November, in the Court of Queen's Bench in Dublin. From the first hour, it was evident that obstruction and delay were the policy ^{The trials.} of the accused. It was not till the 8th that the jury found the indictment "a true bill;" and the trial was by various devices put off till the 15th of January.³ An unfortunate and disgraceful error occurred in the preparation of the jury-lists,—two slips of the lists having been lost, and sixty-three names thus dropped by the way. There was much controversy as to whether this accident would prove fatal to the prosecutions; and there were disputes and delays about the exclusion of certain Catholics from the jury, and about every point that could be

¹ Annual Register, 1843, p. 237.

³ Annual Register, 1843, p. 240.

² Annual Register, 1843, p. 238.

raised. If it was difficult to conduct jury-trial in Ireland in all party cases, it might be anticipated that it would be almost impossible in this critical instance, where it was difficult in the extreme to secure a fair jury. The practice of smuggling a jury on the one hand, and packing it on the other, was familiar to every man's expectation; and few or none believed it possible to find, in all Dublin, twelve dispassionate and impartial men on a question in which repeal was concerned. The community was sharply divided between those who adored, and those who hated, O'Connell. On the important 15th of January, when O'Connell and his son arrived at the Four Courts, conducted by the Lord Mayor in his state-carriage, and escorted by twenty-three other carriages, the jurors drew back on various pleas, — ill health, mistakes in the setting-down of their Christian names, and other excuses. All but one paid the fine of 50*l.*; and he was excused on presenting an affidavit of ill health. One rheumatic old gentleman of seventy-two was compelled to serve; and it was noticed that great efforts were made by the lawyers of the accused to keep on as many invalids as possible, evidently in the hope that some attack of illness might frustrate the trial. Then, two of the accused were absent; and the excuse presented for one of them was, that he lived four miles from town. When the court had waited long enough, and was about to forfeit his recognizances, he appeared, and everybody laughed.

There were few to laugh, however, when the Irish Attorney-general made his statement. Though everybody had read about the repeal movement in the newspapers, for months past, everybody seemed now struck by the story as if it was new. It was a fearful story; and it left the impression on all minds, that a rebellion like that of 1798 was impending. Those who did laugh, as the trial proceeded, were moved to it by the extraordinary character of the scene, — the impudence, the recklessness, the buffoonery, which can hardly be conceived of by those who are accustomed to the gravity of an English court of justice. The case for the prosecution occupied eleven days; and, after that, the aim of the accused, to wear out the jury, became even more evident than before. At length, on the twenty-fourth day, which was Saturday, February 10, there was every expectation that the verdict of the jury would be delivered before night. At seven o'clock, the chief-justice closed his charge, which produced a startling effect in court, from the grouping together of O'Connell's speeches of incitement, and of the threatenings of the repeal newspapers. The jury inquired whether it was necessary for them to proceed that night: they were extremely fatigued. They were not let off; and at half-past seven they retired. A little before eleven, they returned a verdict imperfect in form,

and were sent back. At a quarter past twelve, they were called in, and informed that they must be locked up till Monday.

When the imperfect verdict was proffered, a vast crowd was assembled outside the Courts; and the news that the accused were all found more or less guilty was received with a terrific yell, which must have told on the nerves of some of the worn-out jurymen. A woman had that day entered the shop of one of them, and offered to sell his wife a widow's cap, saying that it would be needed if the verdict was against O'Connell. Between one and two o'clock in the morning, a company paraded the streets, apparently with a view to create a disturbance; but Dublin was full of soldiery, and all was kept quiet. A crowd gathered on Sunday morning to see the jury go to church; but it was thought more prudent to have divine service performed for them in their retreat. At nine o'clock on Monday morning, the Court assembled. Mr. O'Connell was attended by a gentleman whose accession to the repeal cause was at that time hailed as one of its chief triumphs. Mr. William Smith W. S. O'Brien. O'Brien was a gentleman of ancient family, high respectability of character, amiable temper, and sufficient ability to have made a considerable impression in the House of Commons — where he sat as member for Limerick — by his speeches on the subject of Ireland; and especially by one, eminently rational and moderate, in the preceding session. It is no wonder that, when he chose the moment of O'Connell's danger, and that of the cause, for joining it, — before his fatal faults of mind and temper had been brought out by circumstances, — his junction with the repealers was hailed by them with enthusiasm, and regarded by their opponents with feelings of apprehension which are now looked back upon with a melancholy smile. As he entered the court with the accused, this critical morning, no doubt his heart glowed with generous emotions, and he believed he was serving Ireland. None but those who knew him best could have believed, if it had been foretold to them, how his vanity would henceforth swell to bursting, and his small powers of judgment collapse, till he should close the new course on which he was now entering by plunging his poor countrymen into the miseries of abortive rebellion, and subjecting himself to the punishment of the felon, rendered more bitter by his own keen sense of what he must call the ingratitude of Irishmen. He now sat by O'Connell's side, when, at ten o'clock, the jury entered with their verdict.

There were eleven counts in the indictment, and O'Connell was found guilty on them all; and, with the exception The verdict. of some clauses here and there, so were all the accused, except the Rev. Mr. Tierney, the priest, who escaped lightly.¹

¹ Annual Register, 1844, Trials, p. 335.

O'Connell immediately issued an address to the people of Ireland, in which he assured them that the event of his conviction would prove wholly favorable to the repeal cause, and concluded with the words, "Keep the peace for six months, or at the most twelve months longer, and you shall have the Parliament in College Green again."¹ Scarcely credible as it appears, it is true that multitudes even yet believed the promise. The news of O'Connell's conviction flew, like the winds, over all Ireland; and, in Tipperary, the winter night was lighted up with signal-fires on the hills.

It was the 30th of May before sentence was pronounced.² Mr. Tierney escaped altogether. O'Connell was sentenced The sentence. to a year's imprisonment, and a fine of 2,000*l.*, and was bound in high recognizances to keep the peace for seven years. The others were sentenced, each to nine months' imprisonment, a fine of 50*l.*, and to find high security for future peaceable conduct. The lenity of this sentence probably took everybody by surprise. No one could say there was any vindictiveness in it; and, merely as discipline, it was gentle. The best part of it, — the binding-over to keep the peace for seven years, — the part which could not be openly complained of, was the most irksome; but no one could dispute its being necessary, if the proceedings were in any sense justifiable. The judge, Burton, who pronounced sentence, was so much affected as to be scarcely able to do his duty. Mr. O'Connell briefly protested that he was guiltless of conspiracy, and that justice had not been done. He was allowed to choose his place of imprisonment; and he chose the Richmond Penitentiary, in Dublin; and there Appeal to the Lords. he was conveyed. Proceedings were taken for a reversal of the sentence, and the writ of error immediately transmitted to London. In the prison, Mr. O'Connell was permitted to receive his friends; but their names were not allowed to be written down for publication, nor were deputations admitted to address the liberator. Mr. Smith O'Brien exerted himself to get this restriction removed; but the matter rested with the Board of Superintendents of the prison, and they did not yield: so the long trains of carriages rolled away from the gates as they came. The number of visitors was so great as to be fatiguing to the prisoner: but it was observed that his health improved from week to week; and it was clear that his mind was relieved, in his present inaction, under his temporary release from the fearful responsibility which he had taken upon himself, and which had latterly been too much for him. These were his last days of repose and peace of mind.

On the 12th of July, Lord Heytesbury was gazetted as Lord-

¹ Spectator 1844, p. 154.

² Annual Register, 1844, Trials, p. 337.

lieutenant of Ireland ; Lord De Grey's feeble health incapacitating him for an office so arduous. When the new Viceroy landed, and was presented with the keys of the city, it was observed that the ribbons were not, as hitherto, of party-colors, but "sky-blue and white, — emblems of peace, harmony, and love," as a local paper interpreted them. The preceding Sunday was the day appointed for putting up a prayer for O'Connell in all the Catholic chapels ; but there was an ominous difference among the priestly authorities about it. The Catholic Archbishop of Dublin interdicted the act, and was only partially obeyed. Meantime, the appeal of the prisoners was before the Lords. By the Lords, its points were referred to the twelve judges for their opinion.¹ All the judges pronounced six of the eleven counts to be bad or informal, chiefly through the splitting of the charges by the jury in their verdict, in their anxious desire to be precise and accurate. They had, in fact, set up distinctions in the kinds of conspiracy, which were not distinguished in the indictment. These six counts were declared unexceptionable by the Irish judges, and untenable by the English, — a result which would scarcely improve the popular estimate of the administration of law in Ireland. Seven of the judges next opined that the judgment and sentence must stand, notwithstanding, as the Irish judges must know best upon how much of the verdict they grounded their judgment ; and there was enough that was sound to justify the sentence. Two English judges dissented from this view ; and the Peers were now to decide between the opinions of the seven and the minority. Everybody seems to have taken for granted, that the House of Lords would avail itself of every opportunity to confirm the sentence, and keep the agitator laid up. The repealers protested that they did not care ; and such friends as they had in London began to despise the Lords beforehand for their anticipated judgment. On the 6th of September, immediately before the prorogation of Parliament, the law-lords delivered their opinions. Some of the Peers, seeing the decision likely to go in favor of O'Connell, were eager to vote, instead of leaving the matter, as was just and decorous in an intricate question of legality, to the law-lords ; but Lord Wharcliffe interposed to support the dignity of the House as a court of appeal, and induced the lay lords to retire without voting.² The Earl of Verulam was the first who retired behind the woolsack ; and all the lay lords present followed. Four Peers remained. Lord Denham, Lord Cottenham, and Lord Campbell voted that the judgment of the court below should be reversed. Lord Brougham voted the other way.

Judgment
reversed.

The news of the reversal of the judgment, and the victory of

¹ Spectator, 1844, p. 841.

² Spectator, 1844, p. 845.

O'Connell, was received by multitudes in England with a sort of consternation. But the most calm and clear-minded saw the matter at once as all learned by experience to regard it. It was not only that they kept in view the supreme importance of an impartial administration of the law. That would have been enough ; but they also saw that this decision deprived O'Connell of his great theme,—the injustice and oppression of “the Saxon,” and the enslavement of the Irish under the imperial connection. It was by the imperial Parliament that his appeal was justified, and his sentence dissolved ; and it was the hand of benign justice herself that now heaped coals of fire on his head. Time confirmed this view. It was his release that broke the already anxious spirit of the agitator. If a shadow of doubt had rested

Effect on
O'Connell. on the strict legal justice of his punishment, he would have come out from his prison at the year's end, strongly armed in injury, to lay waste the country under a new term of agitation. As it was, he came out — however boastful and clamorous — in reality perplexed, anxious, and feeble. He never was like himself again, except on some single occasions. He was, and he felt himself, half-way down a precipice, uncertain whether to go up or down,—unable to do either. His career was now virtually over.

Yet there was an external grandeur about his release. On the notification of his freedom being given him, he left the prison on foot, with his sons and a few friends.¹ He was recognized in the street, and escorted home by a crowd, whom he

Demonstra-
tions. dismissed with a short speech from his balcony. The next morning early, he went back to his prison, to be carried home in triumph. The whole city was abroad to see ; and it was two hours from the time when the procession began to leave the gates, before the car could be brought up. The car — invented for the occasion, and never seen again but at his funeral — lifted him a dozen feet over the heads of the crowd. He stood at his full height, and was crowned with the repeal-cap. He was portly, and apparently in good health ; but his countenance wore the anxious expression which was now becoming habitual to it. As for the rest, the show was vulgar enough,—the grandsons of the agitator being on the lower platform of the car, in “green velvet tunics, and caps with white feathers.” The best feature was, perhaps, the coach in which were the lawyers in the cause, carrying the “monster indictment.” Mr. O'Connell closed the proceedings by an address from his balcony, in which he “hoped it would not be necessary to hold the Clontarf meeting,” the principle of which was vindicated by the trials. He promised to open out his further plans at the Repeal Hall — whimsically called Con-

¹ Annual Register, 1844, Chron. 95.

ciliation Hall — on the next Monday. At that meeting, which was crowded and triumphant, Mr. W. Smith O'Brien "rushed to the front of the platform, seized the liberator's hand, and shook it vigorously for some moments." In return, Smith O'Brien's hand was pressed to the heart of the liberator; and the cheering and stamping were such that "the very building quaked and trembled." How soon was all this to appear a mockery! These fervent friends were soon to stand before the world as enemies, — O'Brien striving to be a rival sun in the same hemisphere; — O'Connell heaping contempt and foul names on O'Brien! O'Connell kept his promise of announcing "plans" at Conciliation Hall. From this time, he was more fertile in "plans" than ever: he was incessantly changing them. His language grew, if possible, bigger, his demonstrations more vulgar, — with more green velvet, feathers, harps, wreaths, and old Irish costumes, — and his monster meetings more enormous. He was invited to England, and fêted there, and made use of for the Anti-corn-law cause. But he was never really formidable again, and he knew it. He had no policy, no principle, nothing to repose upon; and only his ingenuity and audacity for a resource. A severe blow was struck at him towards the close of 1845, — and his extreme violence showed how it told upon his heart, — by an exposure of his deficiencies as a landlord. It became known, — not O'Connell as a landlord. by any hostile gossip, but by means of a full and authorized investigation into the facts, — that this liberator, whose heart was wrung by the woes of Ireland, whose life was devoted to her redemption, was a middleman, pocketing three times as much rent drawn from a squalid peasantry, as he paid to the head landlord; while also his own tenantry were in "a lost, wretched, and neglected condition."¹ While holding forth patriotically against oppression, hundreds of miles from home, and drawing away the peasantry from honest industry to hear his vaporings about freedom and prosperity, and pay their only shilling in an imaginary cause, he was receiving rent from squalid wretches who wallowed with the pig, and were chilled under his roofs by the wintry wind, and would fain have shared the food of his beagles. He was furious at this exposure; but his hard words mattered little while hard facts were against him. Then he was seen in London streets, walking slowly and stooping, while supported by two of his sons; and members O'Connell's decline. of the House complained that they could not hear his now short speeches, because of the feebleness of his voice. Then rumors arose of approaching famine in Ireland, and his sinking heart could not bear them. He was disturbed at the rise of the "Young-Ireland" party, — the new section of repealers and liberators

¹ Letters of the "Times" Commissioner, p. 520.

who were impatient for war, while he no longer talked of battle-fields, but grew more timid and perplexed from day to day. When the Whigs succeeded to the Peel government of 1846, and he was re-instated in the commission of the peace, and supported the Russell Ministry, he was harassed and shaken by the scorn and enmity of "Young Ireland," who taunted him with having "surrendered." As the famine was seen surely to approach, all political action became out of the question. His physicians said he must be removed from the sight and hearing of whatever would disturb him; and, if the later portraits of him are to be trusted, this was highly necessary. It is affecting to look on the heavy eye, and the mournful and wistful expression of countenance. He went to Hastings; and he did not mend, though the newspapers had paragraphs about his improving health, or health which needed no improvement. He desired that the newspapers might be kept from him, and all tidings of Ireland. No one was to be admitted who would speak of Ireland. He so watched the countenance of his physician when looking at his tongue, and was so alarmed by any gravity of countenance at the moment, that his physician had to remember to look cheerful and pleased. Next, he went abroad, hoping to reach Rome, and die under the blessing of the pope. But he sank too rapidly for this. He was carried to Paris, Marseilles, Genoa; and then he could go no further. The final symptoms consequent on a long decay of the digestive functions came on in

His death.

May, 1847; and, on the 15th of that month, he died, his latest anxieties being lest he should be buried alive. He gave repeated warnings to his physicians and servant against this danger. His melancholy deepened to the last; and his only interest seemed to be in dependence on his confessor, and in repeating the prayers enjoined.¹ On examination, the state of the brain explained his later moods. It was extensively diseased; and the disease, both there and elsewhere, must have been of long standing. This was a natural close of the life he had led,—a life of strong passions, and intense and unremitted excitement, without the repose of a simple integrity; but it is not the less profoundly melancholy. Those who could least pretend to lament his disappearance from his mischievous position in Ireland could not see without emotion the progress of the old triumphal car through the streets of Dublin, bearing the silent remains of him whom multitudes still called by the name of "Liberator." The name has died already, and will be henceforth met with only in the chronicles of a past time. It is difficult now to find an educated Irishman who speaks of O'Connell with respect, or who denies that he set back Ireland half a century by his political

¹ Letters from Genoa, May 16, 1847.

action after 1829. But his name was a spell upon the Catholic peasantry; and when the charm was dissolved, and the idol broken, there was no heart that was not aware of the melancholy which always attends the breaking of idols.

During the years when the repeal agitation was strongest, there were things doing in and for Ireland which afforded some hope on her behalf, even to those who saw most clearly the mischiefs of O'Connell's course, and were most indignant at them. The most essential good that could be rendered to Ireland — that which at least must precede every other — was an exposure of the fact, that her miseries proceeded from moral and social, and not political causes. The famine was coming which was to do this good work in a harsh manner. While the famine was not foreseen, there was something extremely disheartening in O'Connell's pernicious mode of action, and in the rise of Young Ireland, with its political ignorance, its slaughter-house talk, and its bullying boasts, — all so vulgar in the presence of the mournful greatness of the cause it professed to monopolize. But violence and ignorance and folly are, in their own nature, short-lived; and there was a lasting life in some institutions and methods and proposals on behalf of Ireland which were not extinguished by the repeal agitation.

The county of Derry was showing, according to its wont, what could be done by the application of industry and capital among a mixed population of Catholics and Protestants, and under the much-abused Union. On the estates of the London companies were seen "good farm-houses, large squared fields, good fences, and abundant crops,"¹ at the same date when, under an invited visitation, an inquirer was compelled to report: "In no part of the United Kingdom is such neglected wretchedness — such filth, such squalor, such misery of every kind — to be seen, as I saw that day on Mr. O'Connell's estate, in the presence of Mr. Maurice O'Connell."² At the same date, Dr. Kane was asking whence such contrasts arise, and avowing "the fault is not in the country, but in ourselves;" and he adds: "We do not want activity, we are not deficient in mental power; but we want special industrial knowledge."³ This want was considered and met in the introduction of agricultural schools, whose benefits would be spreading over the land when the Union was no more talked of than it is in Scotland now. From the Templemoyle Seminary, for one, young men were going forth every year, to reclaim or improve the land about their homes, and command good labor, and train to good

¹ Letters of "Times" Commissioner, p. 151.

² Letters of "Times" Commissioner, p. 529.

³ Industrial Resources of Ireland, p. 412.

habits, and produce conspicuous crops, and occupy the minds of the peasantry round them with something better than showy processions, and visions of battle-fields that would never be fought. It was already apparent, that, where these young men settled down, the quality of labor and of produce improved, the peasantry were better fed and lodged, and crime so diminished as that the police and soldiery went almost out of sight. Then there were agricultural associations which kept up the interest of the gentry, though they never sufficiently engaged the attention of the farmers. There was also the Irish Waste Land Improvement Society, which did more good to the peasantry, by compelling patient improvement of the soil, and patient learning how to improve it.

An important measure—a measure calculated to heal religious dissensions, and redress Catholic grievances—Charitable-bequests Act. passed the Legislature in the session of 1844,—a measure for the better security and administration of charitable and religious trusts. It was introduced in the Lords, where it met with no obstruction. In the Commons, it was disputed, chiefly by the hot-headed Irish repeal members, who talked as usual of “insult” and “injustice” to Ireland; while their calmer comrades, and everybody else, saw that it was conceived and framed in a just and kind spirit, and must work benignly. At the beginning of the century, a Board was appointed to administer charitable trusts; and the members were almost exclusively Protestants, while nearly three-fourths of the bequests placed under its jurisdiction were Roman-Catholic endowments.¹ By the new Bill, three members of the Board were to be dignitaries of the law, two of whom might be Catholics; and ten more commissioners were to be appointed by the Crown, five of whom were to be Protestants, and five Catholics. Various imperfections of the existing law were so redressed as to give a preponderance at the Board to the Catholic section where Catholic bequests were concerned. Mr. O’Connell injured himself much with the most enlightened part of his Catholic countrymen by his opposition to this Bill,—an opposition which he grounded on his fears of the consequences of sending Catholics to the castle, and of sanctioning a connection of the Catholic Church with the State.² On occasion of the third reading, Mr. Maurice J. O’Connell said, that “he was bound to express his conviction, that, when the present heats had subsided, the Bill would be found a substantial benefit to the people of Ireland, raising the condition of their clergymen, without shackling the influence exercised by them over their flocks.”³ In August, Mr. O’Connell declared that all befitting

¹ Hansard, lxxvi. p. 1512.

² Spectator, 1844, p. 1157.

³ Hansard, lxxvi. p. 1780.

means should be taken to prevent the Act going into execution, and intimated that it could never take effect if Roman Catholics refused the office of commissioners; yet, on the 21st of November, the "Dublin Evening Freeman" announced "the first blow at the independence of the Catholic Church," — the rumor that Catholic prelates and laymen of respectability had consented to become commissioners.¹ It was even so. The Catholic Primate of Ireland, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, and three more Catholics "of respectability," were gazetted as commissioners in December, together with four prelates and laymen of the Established Church, and one Presbyterian divine.² The success of this healing measure, which brought the heads of the two churches together to watch over the interests of religion and charity, was a sore addition to Mr. O'Connell's perplexities, and a severe blow to his influence, by forcing him into collision with the chief priests of his own communion.

During the same session, the Lord Chancellor united with a Catholic Peer, Lord Beaumont, in obtaining the abolition of various penal Acts against the Romanists, ^{Penal Act repeal.} which, though obsolete, were an offence as they stood in the statute-book.³ The abolition of the office of Lord-lieutenant was proposed, as a means of bringing Ireland into the same close union as exists between England and Scotland.⁴ Mr. Hume had striven for this object twenty years before, and he was as fully convinced as ever that the assignment of a viceregal ^{Viceroyalty discussed.} government to Ireland gave that country a colonial appearance which was highly disadvantageous. The frequent changes of administration in Dublin were a serious drawback upon good government. Instead of a responsible Minister of the Crown residing in London, there had been sixteen chief-secretaries for Ireland in the first thirty years after the Union. A smaller consideration, but not an unimportant one, was the economy of the change. Mr. Hume moved an address to the Queen, requesting her to consider of the abolition of the viceroyalty. The answer of Lord Eliot, the Irish Secretary, was that the change would be inconvenient; that the Irish people did not desire it; and that the office was six hundred years old, whereas none such had existed in Scotland.⁵ Lord John Russell, upon this, pointed out that it had been in contemplation to appoint a separate council for Scotland; but that Lord Somers had maintained that such a council would prevent the Union from ever being complete. There was opposition enough to induce Mr. Hume to withdraw his motion. His object will probably be carried out in an easy

¹ Spectator, 1844, pp. 820, 1112.² Dublin Gazette, Dec. 18, 1844.³ Hansard, lxxvi. p. 1171.⁴ Hansard, lxxvi. p. 834.⁵ Hansard, lxxvi. p. 850.

and natural manner, — by such improvements in science and the arts as are already bridging the narrow sea, and bringing London and Dublin within easy hail of each other. When the English, from the Queen to the commercial traveller, can visit Ireland as easily as Scotland, and London news can be heard as soon in Dublin as in Edinburgh, and a Secretary of State in London can govern and protect the one as well as the other, it is pretty certain that the whole apparatus of the viceroyalty, about which the affections of the Catholic Irish certainly do not cling, will be swept away; and there will be one reminder the less of the tenure of conquest under which this special machinery of government was set down in the midst of the Irish people.

The subject of endowing the Roman-Catholic clergy was much discussed throughout the country at this time. Loud and vehement declarations were uttered by the Irish political leaders in the name of the priests, and by many of the priests themselves, that nothing would ever induce them to accept of a shilling of endowment from Protestant hands; but numbers of thoughtful men believed then, as numbers of thoughtful men believe at this day, that, with time and patience, such a scheme would work. The Protestant Church in Ireland is felt to be an intolerable grievance, in its existing preponderance. All attempts to reduce it to its fair proportions, and settle it in its true function, have failed; and the easiest way now seems to be to raise the depressed church of the majority into a greater fitness for its function. As a missionary church, the Establishment has failed, and will evidently continue to fail. If the Catholic majority of the Irish people do not and will not enter it, the way which remains to enlighten and improve them is to elevate and improve the quality of their priesthood, — a priesthood hitherto kept ignorant and dependent by the meagreness of their means of education, and by their absolute dependence on their flocks for subsistence. If a provision were once made for them by law, and the arrangement placed beyond dispute, — if an annual sum for every priest were known to be lying at the banker's, — it was the belief of the advocates of the endowment that the priests would take it; and there could be nothing in receiving a provision thus which could subject the recipients to any dangers of dependence comparable to those amidst which they were actually living. The example of foreign countries showed that there is no abstract objection in the minds of a Catholic priesthood to endowment by a Protestant State. The difficulty in the Irish case was purely political, and therefore likely to give way under a liberal and kindly political management.

The proposal of an increased grant to Maynooth College was

Endowment
of Catholic
clergy.

regarded by many as a first step towards the object, though it might perfectly well stand by itself, as having important merits of its own. It was a great thing to provide for the improved education of the priesthood, whether or not this advantage was to be followed up by making them less dependent for subsistence on their peasant flocks. It was a great thing to raise them by education above the wish for vulgar and dangerous power over the people, whether or not the sordid part of the temptation was to be afterwards obviated. Sir R. Peel had the courage to propose, on the 3d of April, 1845, that the parliamentary grant to Maynooth College should be enlarged so as, in some degree, to bear out the purpose of making any grant at all. The institution had always been most meagrely supplied with comforts, and even with the necessities of life; the professors were paid less than counting-house clerks; and, at present, the distress of the times had materially reduced the contributions of the middle classes, who paid for the education of their sons. It would be better to withdraw all pretence of government support than to let the college go on in this way; and it was a question, how money could be better spent than in really educating the students who were to be — whether well or ill qualified — the future guides and guardians of the Catholic population of Ireland. It seems as if no great courage could be required to propose such an augmentation of the annual grant to Maynooth as to make it worth while to award any grant at all. But it did require great courage; and there was scarcely any act of his bold administration for which the Premier was more vituperated than for this. It was the great political controversy of the year, — the subject on which society seemed to be going mad. It was not the extent of the grant that was deprecated, but the advance in that direction at all. Hitherto the grant had been 9,000*l.*, and the trustees had been authorized to hold land to the amount of 1,000*l.* per annum; but this could never be done, because the trustees were never incorporated.¹ They were now to be incorporated, and permitted to hold land to the amount of 3,000*l.* per annum. The sum of 6,000*l.* was to be granted for professors' salaries, which would henceforth be large enough to yield comfort and respectability, and therefore to secure a higher order of qualification than could hitherto be commanded. At present, the number of students was 440. It was proposed to make adequate allowances to 500 students. The annual grant would thus be raised from 9,000*l.* to 26,360*l.* As it would be necessary to enlarge the college, and it was most desirable to render it more comfortable and cheerful than at present, the sum of 30,000*l.* was asked for

¹ Hansard, lxxix. pp. 32-36.

as a special grant, the needful repairs being henceforth provided for by an annual vote. There was nothing in this that ought to have alarmed a people and Parliament accustomed to make an annual grant to Maynooth. It seems a matter of mere prudence to provide thus far for the decent education and bare comfort of a body of 500 priests, who were certain to have more influence over the Irish people than all other persons together. Yet the public consternation was excessive. The Dissenters pushed an opposition almost as loud and formidable as on the factory-education clauses. Public meetings to remonstrate against the measure were held over the whole kingdom,—a violent one at the London Tavern leading the way. Upwards of a hundred of the merchants, bankers, and traders of London signed the requisition for this meeting. The first resolution declared the proposed grant to be a renunciation of the Protestantism under which the empire had flourished; and the mover took upon him to declare that the grant was “directly opposed to the revealed will of the Creator.”¹ The Dublin Protestant Operative Association demanded the impeachment of the Prime Minister. Some members of Parliament were called on by their constituents to resign their seats; and the table of the House groaned under the mass of petitions against the measure. The truth was, this measure was an express discountenancing of the “Protestant ascendancy” in Ireland; while in England it at once provoked the fears of the vast body of Dissenters about the spread of the Romish faith, and their jealousy about government endowments of religion. Not a few advocates of the measure were heard to say, that it was now becoming necessary to endow all ministers of every faith and denomination. The external agitation was reflected within the walls of Parliament in a debate of three nights in the Lords, and six in the Commons, on the second reading of the Bill. It passed, however, on the 16th of June, amidst protests from five bishops and three lay Peers, who objected to it on the grounds that it provided for the maintenance of religious error, and for opposition to the Reformation; and that it countenanced the notion, that religious truth was a matter of indifference to the State.²

A more important measure, tending to the great object of abating religious rancor in Ireland, met with resistance from an opposite quarter. In the royal speech at the opening of the session, the Sovereign recommended to the best consideration of Parliament “the policy of improving and extending the opportunities for academical education in Ireland.”³ The ministers were prepared with their plan, which

¹ Daily papers, April 15, 1845.

² Hansard, lxxxi. p. 594.

³ Hansard, lxxvii. p. 4.

was brought forward by Sir James Graham on the 9th of May.¹ The national-education system in Ireland was working well; but its host of 400,000 pupils included only children, and, as yet, children of the poorer classes, though it was extending upwards. It was desirable to enable those who had sat side by side on the school-benches, as yet untouched by the religious bigotry which was the curse of the country, to continue the education which had begun so favorably; and also to provide for the same harmony being extended to all classes of society. The government, therefore, proposed the establishment of three colleges, in the north, west, and south of Ireland, in which a liberal and comprehensive academical education should be opened to young men of every religious denomination, without distinction. There could, of course, be no theological professorships, founded by the government; but every facility was afforded for the voluntary establishment of such in connection with the colleges. As for the question whether these new colleges should be incorporated into a new university; or whether Trinity College, Dublin, should, without invasion of her present Protestant rights, be enabled to admit the new colleges into incorporation with her as a university, — this was for Parliament to decide upon. After much debate, earnest but less violent than that on the Maynooth question, the measure was carried, by a vote of 177 to 26 in the Commons, and without a division in the Lords, — the question of the university arrangements being left over till the views of the governing powers of all the colleges could be obtained.² The bigots among the Catholic clergy were the foes in this case. The cry about “godless” education was loud, and has been long.

The new institutions have ever since gone by the name of the “godless” colleges among the fanatics of the Romish faith, and some few of the Protestant Church; and, by much painstaking and prodigious misrepresentation, the less enlightened of the Catholic priesthood at length obtained from the conscientious but weak pope, Pius IX., a rescript against these colleges, as places of education of the Catholic youth of Ireland. The measure was and is, however, all-important, as throwing the *onus* of religious exclusiveness on the Catholic portion of society in Ireland; and as a distinct pledge that the imperial government was at last exercising an impartial sway over its subjects of differing faiths. The sum proposed for the erection of the three colleges was 100,000*l.*; for their maintenance, — that is, the salaries of officers, and the prizes for the encouragement of learning, — 18,000*l.* per annum. In each college there was to be a principal, with a salary of 1,000*l.*; and ten or twelve professors, with salaries of 300*l.* a year. Residences were not provided: but

¹ Hansard, lxxx. pp. 345–366.

² Hansard, lxxxii. pp. 379, 1025.

the principal of each college would live within the walls; and the modes of residence of the students were to be under safe regulation, under the Act. The power of appointment and removal of the professors was to rest with the Crown, as was obviously fitting in a case which involved party-feelings to so great an extent. The preparations for these new institutions were immediately begun. It must be left for time to show how they work.

In February of this year, a report was presented by the Commissioners of Inquiry, sent out in 1843, to investigate the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland.¹ Much expectation was excited by the appointment of the Devon Commission, — as it was called, from the Earl of Devon being
The Devon Commission. at the head of it, — and the expectation was kept up by the eagerness of multitudes of persons connected with the proprietorship and occupation of land in Ireland to give evidence before the Commission. They came in crowds to tell what they knew and thought and felt; and it was hoped that now, at last, light would be obtained as to what was to be hoped and feared, and what could be done. The information obtained was extensive and valuable; and large practical use might soon have been made of it, in the form of proposed legislation, but that the famine was approaching, which put aside all considerations but how to prevent the whole rural population from dying of hunger. Though the time has not arrived for making use of the disclosures of this report, and though much of it may be actually superseded by the operations of calamity, it remains a token of solicitude for the regeneration of Ireland on the part of the ministers in office during its preparation.

During the decline of Mr. O'Connell's power, and the rising conflict between his repeal party and that which was to be headed by Mr. W. Smith O'Brien, while want was becoming aggravated, and famine was approaching, the amount of outrage in Ireland increased so grievously, that ministers introduced a
Coercion Bill. Coercion Bill early in the session of 1846. The Bill was framed strictly for the protection of quiet members of society, — permitting the Viceroy to award compensation to the maimed, and to the families of the murdered, under the attacks at which the measure was aimed.² Under it, disturbed districts might be proclaimed, and night-meetings within them prevented. The Bill passed the Lords easily, but was vehemently disputed, and at last lost, in the Commons, where party feeling ran high amidst the final agitation about the corn-laws, and the hopes and fears about the going-out of the Peel Ministry. It was generally understood that the defeat of ministers on this Coercion

¹ Annual Register, 1845, Pub. Doc., p. 455.

² Hansard, lxxxiii. p. 1363.

Bill — so mild of its class — was occasioned by a combination of parties ; and the speeches of Lord G. Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli, universally reprobated for their spirit, were regarded as manifestations of the real reasons of the result. At the moment when the Corn-law Repeal Bill was passing the Lords, the second reading of the government Bill for Ireland was refused by a majority of 292 to 219, after a delay of five months, which would have been seriously injurious to the operation of the Bill, ^{Bill lost.} if it had passed.¹ The division took place on the 26th of June, three days before the announcement of the retirement of the Peel Administration, — a retirement which might have been rendered necessary by the failure of this measure, if it had not been, as was well known, determined beforehand, as a natural consequence of the carrying of the measure for which Sir R. Peel had returned to power, — the repeal of the corn-laws.

We must look further back for the deciding cause of the retirement of the Peel Administration. Before the end ^{Threatenings of famine.} of 1845, it was clear that the potato-crop in Ireland was likely to be utterly destroyed by blight. Men whose vision was bounded by political party-spirit endeavored to persuade others as well as themselves, that the avowed alarm of the Cabinet for the food of half a nation was little more than a device to get the corn-laws repealed with the least possible difficulty ; but men of more enlightenment and a more simple conscience had faith in the earnestness of the Minister, in the reality of his solemnity, in the sincerity of the solicitude which marked his countenance and his voice, and in the truth of the abundant evidence which he laid before Parliament of the probable extent of the approaching calamity. It was all too true. The work of preparation for a new age for Ireland was taken out of human hands ; and a terrible clearance of the field of Irish soil and society was about to be made for the efforts of future apostles, and the wisdom of future legislators. The virtues of two parties of rulers were not, however, to be in vain. Under them the great truth had appeared, that the causes of Irish misery were not political, but social ; and both had done what they could to purge out the spirit of religious and political rancor which had hitherto poisoned every public benefit, and aggravated every social woe, of that unhappy country.

¹ Hansard, lxxxvii. p. 1027.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ecclesiastical disturbances, whose beginnings have been noticed, were by this time becoming of the gravest import. Scotland was affording as complete an exemplification as the world has seen of the perplexities attendant on an alliance between the Church and the State. At the date before us, events were occurring which tested the merits of a scheme concocted by Harley, Bolingbroke, and Swift, in the palace of Queen Anne. By an Act of 1711, the power of free choice, the *liberum arbitrium*, as to the appointment of pastors in the Scotch Church, was taken from the Church courts, by subjecting the power of the presbytery to the interpretation, and even control, of the civil courts. The minority of the General Assembly of that time approved of the Act, which fulfilled their idea of the connection of Church and State. The majority protested against it, from year to year; but the protest, being of no avail, at length became little more than a form. The leading men of the time, the philosophers and men of letters, who represented Scotland to English eyes, were not earnest Churchmen, — not earnest about religion at all; and the arrangement of 1711 suited their views very well, as being moderate, decorous, and tending to peace. They did not see what was going on, wherever a pastor whom the flock did not like was forced upon them. In a multitude of parishes, the patron nominated the minister; if the presbytery found him unexceptionable in “life, literature, and doctrine,” they were then obliged to appoint him, however unacceptable he might be to the flock. There were many ways in which a minister, with whose “life, literature, and doctrine” no fault could be found, might be unfit for the care of a particular parish. He might have a weak voice, or too much scholarship for a rustic congregation, or he might have town ways and ideas, or he might not speak Gaelic where the people understood little English. In such cases, the people would turn to the Voluntaries, and become Dissenters. We have before seen how dissent abounded in Scotland at the period of the Melbourne Ministry, and how virulently the High-churchmen of the Kirk regarded the Voluntaries, who claimed to be, and were, considerably more than half the nation.

In 1834, an effort had been made to recover the power which had been taken from the Church by the Act of 1711; and apparently it succeeded. But the power of the State was not to be cast out from the Church so easily as at first appeared; and the Church found itself compelled to advance, or assert new claims.¹ In the quarrel about these, the Establishment was rent in twain, and the Church of Scotland became a warning and a sign of the fate of all churches which have made the effort to maintain at once an alliance with the State and the principles of the Reformation.

The progress of dissent was so rapid after 1820, that the earnest members of the Kirk took it much to heart.

Wherever they turned, in hope of bringing back the Voluntaries to the Church, they were met by the objection, that the people preferred choosing their own pastors to having them nominated, in a compulsory way, by a lay-patron, who might or might not, according to his temper, listen to any objections on the part of his flock to his nominee. The earnest Churchmen saw that this lay-patronage must be got rid of; and petitions for its abolition so poured in upon Parliament, that a select committee of the Commons was appointed in 1834 to consider the subject.² The same agitation wrought in another direction, — giving a large majority of non-intrusion members to the General Assembly, in which they had hitherto been the minority. While the committee of the Commons was sitting, the General Assembly passed an enactment, containing a declaration and a rule. The declaration was, that it was a

Patronage
the cause
of dissent.

The veto
law.

“fundamental law” of the Church, that no pastor should be intruded on any congregation, contrary to the will of the people; and a rule was prescribed, by which the will of the people might be ascertained and manifested. A veto on the nomination was afforded to them. This is the celebrated Veto Act. Those who passed it professed to believe it to be perfectly compatible with the Act of 1711: it was also declared to be so by the law-officers of the Crown, and emphatically praised by the Lord Chancellor, who pronounced it to be “in every respect more desirable than any other course that could have been taken.”³ For five years, the Veto Act worked so well, that it is no wonder if those who devised and passed it supposed that the matter was settled, and that the Church had indeed recovered her powers. When the minority in the Assembly saw how acceptable a body of ministers — 250 in the five years — was settled under this Act, they first learned to approve it, and then to avow their approbation. The tendency to dissent was supposed to be subsiding, and the

¹ Gordon's Memorial, &c., 1841, p. 4.

² Memorial, &c., p. 5.

³ Memorial, &c., p. 6.

Scotch clergy instituted the movement for Church extension, which was described in a former chapter of our history.

There were secular persons, however, who were not satisfied to see the power of appointment to parishes dependent on the pleasure of the majority of the communicants. This dependence lessened the value of patronage, and, as these persons thought, its dignity; and they were by no means clear, that the power given to the communicants by the Veto Act was compatible with the Act of Queen Anne. They were disposed to try the fact; and occasions for such an inquisition soon offered.

Lord Kinnoull presented a Mr. Young to the parish of Auchterarder. The heads of families in the congregation did not like the appointment, and vetoed it. The presbytery were ordered to take him on trial. They refused to do so, on the plea that he could not be ordained because the ecclesiastical conditions relating to his call by the people had not been fulfilled.¹ Mr. Young applied to the Court of Session and the House of Lords to grant him both the civil benefice and the cure of souls. The decision of the civil courts was, that the presbytery must take him on trial, as he was competent in the three prescribed conditions, — of life, literature, and doctrine; and the acts of the Kirk were not binding upon them. The Assembly did not contest this decision, as far as its civil relations went. They surrendered the stipend, house, and external privileges, to the patron and his nominee. This was in May, 1839.

The Church thus found that there really was an incompatibility between the Act of 1711 and their veto law of 1834. The thing to be done now was to maintain the principle of non-intrusion, and endeavor to induce the Legislature to modify the statute so as to bring the civil law into accordance with the conscience of the Church. While requesting this reform from the Legislature, the Church acted mildly in regard to the veto law, suspending operations under it till the difficulty should have been accommodated.² For two or three years, no progress whatever was made; and, through this delay, circumstances arose which induced a more serious claim on behalf of the Church, and converted the whole affair into one of vital opposition.

When the judgment in the Auchterarder case went against the Church, and in favor of the lay-patron, no demand was made on the presbytery and the people to receive Mr. Young. When the fruits of the benefice were given up to him, they were left unmolested, and not required to surrender the spiritual freedom they held of declining the services of an unacceptable pastor. But, as there had been parties who had instituted a trial of the question thus far, so there were other parties who

The Strath-bogie case.

¹ Westminster Review, 1840, p. 475.

² Memorial, &c., p. 18.

now resolved to push the experiment further, and ascertain what the connection between the Church and the State really was. The presbytery of Strathbogie had of old been celebrated for its zeal for the civil power, its loyalty to the Sovereign, and its leaning towards Episcopacy; and now it was the scene of the decisive struggle between the powers of the Church and the State. In the parish of Marnoch, a Mr. Edwards had been assistant to the minister for three years, and was then nominated for minister, on the pulpit becoming vacant.¹ He was so unacceptable, that the call—the forms of which were preserved all this time—was signed by only one parishioner, while 261 out of 300 heads of families on the roll of communicants dissented. The one parishioner who signed the call was a publican; and he lost his business immediately. The court next above the presbytery—the Synod of Moray—directed the presbytery to reject Mr. Edwards; but they did not do so till ordered by the highest authority of all,—the General Assembly. When they had done it, an acceptable minister was presented. But Mr. Edwards obtained an interdict from the Court of Session against the settlement of the second nominee, and a declaration that the presbytery were bound to take Mr. Edwards himself on trials. The members of the presbytery were now in the painful position of being under contradictory orders from the General Assembly and the Court of Session,—from the Church and the State. The General Assembly and its adherents took for granted that the members of the presbytery ought to consult their spiritual superiors how to proceed; but such a consultation would have been of itself a surrender of the question. The seven members of the presbytery determined for themselves to obey the civil power; and they admitted Edwards to trials. They were brought to the bar of the General Assembly, where Dr. Chalmers moved for their deposition from the holy ministry. Dr. Cook, the leader of the State party in the Church,—“the Moderates,” as they were called,—moved that the seven ministers at the bar should be dismissed, and confirmed in their present rank in the Church. Dr. Chalmers obtained a majority of 97 in an Assembly of 347; and the Strathbogie ministers were sentenced to deposition.² Their parishes were declared vacant, and Mr. Edwards was to be deprived of his license as a minister of the Church.

The seven deposed ministers appealed to Parliament; and their case was brought forward by Lord Aberdeen on the 15th of June, 1841. Lord Melbourne let everybody see that he did not understand the matter: he had promised, certainly, to maintain the law, and he had no doubt the Lord Advocate would see that it was done; these were very difficult questions, but they

¹ Westminster Review, 1840, p. 477.

² Annual Register, 1841, p. 73.

seemed to him to lie within the Church entirely : and then he spoke so of the arrogance of the Church of Scotland, as to set the Lords laughing.¹ Lord Haddington rebuked the vacillation and indifference of the Premier, declaring that it was owing to the weakness of the government — its carelessness or hesitation — that the divisions in the Scotch Church had become what they were. The concluding statement of the Premier was, that the government really meant to execute the law ; and that the best way of doing that was to leave the law to execute itself. For want of a few words of earnest declaration of the intentions of government, however, the impression was very general, that the Ministry were somewhat daunted by the imposing attitude of the ecclesiastical chiefs in Scotland, and disposed to leave the affair as much as possible to be managed in the Scotch courts.

The deposed ministers obtained an interdict forbidding all preachers of the Kirk from entering their pulpits. The Assembly forthwith deputed one of their chief members to go and preach there, and encouraged various ministers to officiate in those parishes regularly and perseveringly, — thus compelling their licentiates to break the civil law, because their predecessors had broken their ecclesiastical law. Penalties hung over the heads of the preaching substitutes ; and penalties had been imposed on those whom they superseded. This state of things could not last or be endured. The number of public meetings which took place all over Scotland, and the vehemence of the speakers on both sides, began to be a significant warning to Parliament, that talking and laughing, and even wrangling, were no longer serious enough for the occasion. In truth, the reader of the newspapers of that time feels little inclination to smile, even in the midst of the extreme wonder which he feels at the point which party-spirit can reach. The evidences of wrath and hatred are too strong, and the mutual imputations too shocking, to leave room for any amusement. To an impartial reader, it appears that there never was a case in which men might more reasonably hold opposite opinions. The case was one of difficult decision to the wisest ; for the perplexity lay deep in an abyss of compromise, and by no means within the grasp of passion and partisanship. The language used in regard to the Church leaders on the one hand, and Mr. Edwards and the seven Strathbogie ministers on the other, was, however, as violent as can ever have been used about monsters of vice. Such language led, as was natural, to violence of another kind. The pious attendants at church, on critical occasions and at public meetings, pelted one another with snow and with stones ; and, here and there, there was fighting enough to call for the interfe-

¹ Hansard, lviii. p. 1507.

rence of the police. The gravest thinkers, and men of the highest conscientiousness, saw more clearly, from month to month, that there was no alternative for the Church party but to withdraw from their connection with the State. Position of the Church party. The choice lay merely between this and the surrender of the spiritual powers of the Church. They had staked every thing on their position, that the providing ministers for the people was a spiritual concern, though the disposal of the emoluments was a secular one. The State would not recede from its legal function of supporting patronage; and the ecclesiastical party must therefore separate its function from its partnership with the civil law.

When this result was evidently becoming necessary, Lord Aberdeen, a member of the Peel Ministry, which was Lord Aberdeen's Bill. now in power, made one last effort to preserve the unity of the Scotch Church by a Bill, intended to remove doubts respecting the admission of ministers to benefices in Scotland. A similar Bill, about which Lord Aberdeen and Dr. Chalmers had misunderstood one another, had been proposed and withdrawn in 1840. It was not likely now, after three years of strong warfare, to be well received by Dr. Chalmers and his followers; and it was hardly intended for them, but rather for the large body of clergy who were unwilling to leave the Establishment, and yet must have a clear settlement of their consciences, by a distinct knowledge of their case, if they were to remain. In 1840, 400 ministers and 2000 elders had declared in favor of the Bill; but now, though it passed through Parliament, it was too late to affect materially the condition of the Church. It provided that the presbytery to which any case of unacceptable nomination should be referred, should have power to inquire into the circumstances of the parish, and the number and character of objectors; and, if the objectors should appear to be in the right, the presbytery had power to refuse to admit the nominee; being obliged, however, to specify the grounds of their decision.¹ Next, the veto was abolished, being rendered unnecessary by the foregoing provision. In regard to the qualifications of a candidate, the appeal must lie to the Church courts alone, as the civil courts could not have any concern with such a matter. The civil courts were, however, to hold themselves in readiness to interfere, in case of any excess of jurisdiction on the part of the Church courts. It was clear to all who saw how far the controversy now transcended the veto question, that Lord Aberdeen's Bill was no longer what the times required. It did nothing towards determining the province of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction on any ground of principle. Several of the Lords objected that

¹ Annual Register, 1843, p. 210.

it pronounced virtually against the decision in the Auchterarder case, and that it was inconsistent with the existing law of Scotland. The pleas in its favor all related to the necessity of allaying excitement in Scotland; and high legal authorities were adduced, which declared the Bill to be strictly in accordance with the law of Scotland, and with the decision upon the Auchterarder case; and thus was there as much to be said on both sides among the lawyers as among the excited population in the North. It was the last day of July before the Bill was discussed in the Commons, after its passage through the Lords' House. The thinness of the House showed that even yet the full importance of the subject was not understood. Mr. Fox Maule, who ought to know, said that the Church party, now called the Seceders, took scarcely any interest whatever in the Bill; and, when Sir R. Peel resorted to quotations from speeches in the Assembly about reliance on the government for interference for the settlement of consciences, he was describing a time long gone by, and a state of affairs which could never be renewed.¹ It mattered little now, as regarded the immediate difficulty, whether the Bill passed or not. It became law on the 17th of August.²

We have said that the Church party were now called the Seceders. The time had indeed come. The Scotch Church was divided into irreconcilable parties. The incidents which led on to the secession were these.

At the last meeting of the General Assembly in 1842, two addresses to the Crown had been proposed and agreed upon; one of which invited the attention of Her Majesty to the encroachments of the Court of Session on the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church; and the other prayed that the Sovereign would order measures towards the abolition of Church patronage in Scotland. A memorial to the Cabinet was also prepared; to which Sir James Graham replied in a letter issued on the 4th of January, 1843.³ This was a letter of reasoning comment on the memorial sent in to ministers; and it presents a clear account of the government view — the view of “the Moderates” — of the whole case. It occasioned much anger, and was spoken of with scorn, — this “chopping of logic while the Church was falling in pieces,” — this fiddling while the burning was going on; but it is evident that the party would have been more angry, and with better cause, if Sir James Graham had given a peremptory and unreasoned reply. The document ended with a clear declaration of government intentions. Government had been willing to attempt legislation, in a hope of a settlement; but “the acts of the General Assembly ...

¹ Hansard, lxxi. p. 59.

² Hansard, lxxi. p. 897.

³ Annual Register, 1843, p. 241.

have unhappily diminished, so far at least as the Church is concerned, these reasonable hopes; and Her Majesty's ministers, now understanding that nothing less than the total abrogation of the rights of the Crown and of other patrons will satisfy the Church, are bound with firmness to declare that they cannot advise Her Majesty to consent to the grant of any such demand." This letter must be answered; and circumstances occurred in the Assembly which allowed the Church party to have all their own way in answering it. It was a matter of contention in the Assembly, and also before the civil courts, whether a certain class of the clergy, called *quoad sacra* ministers, — being the incumbents of non-parochial churches, — should have the position and privileges of parochial ministers. As the judges differed on this point, it was no wonder that the Assembly divided eagerly upon it. Five of the judges sanctioned the claim of the *quoad sacra* ministers, and eight rejected it. Their opinion was declared on the 20th of January. On the 31st, the Assembly, constituting itself a commission, was to resolve on a reply to Sir James Graham.¹ Dr. Cook, the leader of the Moderates, moved the exclusion of the *quoad sacra* ministers who were present, as disqualified by law from sharing in the business. Dr. Cook's motion was negatived by a majority of 92; and the mover, with his minority, retired from the meeting whose proceedings could not be legal. A committee was formed by those who remained, for the purpose of preparing a petition to Parliament, which was presented by Mr. Fox Maule, in the Commons, on the 7th of March. The House, after a debate of two nights, decided by a vast majority — 211 to 76 — against appointing a committee to consider the petition.² Not only the result, but the tone of the debate, showed the Church party that they had nothing more to hope for from Parliament. Everybody spoke respectfully and decorously of the Church of Scotland; but nobody, except the members of the government and a few other speakers, seemed to know or care what the controversy was about. The House was quiet, but indifferent. Members were conscious of their ignorance, and had no hope of clearing up their minds by means of a single debate; so they sat still, and probably wished the matter over. One keen disappointment to the Church party was, that Lord John Russell went against them on this occasion, after having seemed to admit their claims in a letter to his Scotch constituents of the city of London. It was not likely that the Whigs, who never showed themselves clear or decided on the question when they were in power, should have mastered the subject now; but the Church party attributed the change in Lord J.

¹ Annual Register, 1843, p. 245.

² Hansard, lxvii. p. 510.

Russell's tone to his having received false information about the spirit and purposes of the Church party.¹ It was believed that he was misled by some "Scotch Liberals," who declared, only one week before the secession, that the number of ministers who would give up their endowments would not exceed six.

Far indeed was this from the truth, as was seen when the Preparation for secession. memorable 18th of May, 1843, arrived. From the hour when the decision of Parliament became known, the non-intrusion party pushed their preparations vigorously. Lecturers traversed all Scotland, canvassing for support for the Free Presbyterian Church, about to take its place in opposition to the Church of Scotland. A fund was to be raised for the erection of churches and the support of ministers. Missionary objects were naturally united with the primary aim of protesting against the usurpation of the State over the Church. "We shall indeed," said Dr. Candlish, on the 21st of March, "cultivate our own districts; we shall have stated congregations, with stated elders and ministers; but we shall have our tours of preaching too,—our visits to all comers of the land; and I believe that yet, by God's blessing on our free and faithful preachings, in the highways and hedges, in barns and stables, in saw-pits and tents, we shall yet regenerate Scotland, and have multitudes of those who are now perishing for lack of knowledge to listen to the glad tidings of salvation."² Though the season was one of severe commercial distress, 300,000*l.* were subscribed in a few months for the support of the Free Church.

The next important matter was the election of commissioners to the General Assembly. The *quoad sacra* ministers had but little chance of election after the decision of the majority of the judges on their claims. A persuasion prevailed, that the Moderates would have all their own way in the Assembly. The 18th of May would show.

The windows along the way were crowded on that day; and so was the gallery of St. Andrew's Church, where the The secession. Assembly held its sittings. The non-intrusion members were cheered as they entered. One of their leaders, Dr. Welsh, moderator of the former Assembly, took the chair. After prayer, he did not, as is usual, proceed to make up the roll, but instead, read the protest in which the non-intrusion members had recorded the grounds of their secession from the Assembly, and from alliance with the State.³ It was an act of excellent temper, taste, and prudence, in the seceders then to withdraw, without seeking controversy. To the number of 169, they took their hats, and walked out of the church. As the

¹ Westminster Review, xl. p. 204.

² Spectator, 1843, p. 296.

³ Annual Register, 1843, p. 247.

foremost of them appeared at the door, the crowd in the streets set up a cheer; and the cheering continued, with few pauses, and only the disturbance of a few hisses, all the way to a hall at Cannonmills, where 300 more seceding clergy and a large and sympathizing auditory awaited them. In Dr. Chalmers's ensuing address, he took the pains which might be expected from him to explain that the seceders were not Dissenters. They left a vitiated establishment, but adhered to the Church, and claimed to be a more real Church than that which remained Established. This was true now, as it had been true in regard to ancient secessions; and, as in their case, the matter will probably end, after a few years of protests against Voluntarism, in the Free Churchmen being numbered among the Voluntaries of Scotland.

On the 20th, there was a demonstration which somewhat derogates from the dignity of the occasion. The Marchioness of Breadalbane was received in the hall with loud cheers. In the course of proceedings this day, complaints were made that great landed proprietors would not grant the smallest portion of ground for new churches; but the zealous leaders declared, that an old vessel here and there, moored along the shore, and tents that could be carried from place to place, would serve their needs. On the next day, Sunday, the first secession church, which had been built in six weeks, was opened; and neither it, nor the hall where Dr. Chalmers preached, nor the church attended by the Queen's High-commissioner, could contain the eager crowds that resorted to them. On the next day, the 22d, the General Assembly made haste to undo the acts of the seceders, *Counter proceedings*—excluding the *quoad sacra* ministers, though with kindly wishes for their admission under a parochial right, and re-instating the seven Strathbogie ministers.¹ Then followed the deposition of the seceders, and the declaration that their parishes were vacant. On the same day, the seceders, formed into an assembly of their own, renounced their brethren of the Establishment in much the same mode. An Act of Separation, now known as the "Disruption," was decreed; and, on the next day, it was produced for signature, previous to its being transmitted to the Assembly. Prayer preceded and followed the signing of the Act,—four hours being occupied in affixing the signatures. An address to the Queen was passed, and much business in connection with their new position transacted; and then, having agreed to hold another assembly in October, at Glasgow, the meetings dissolved. The General Assembly was also dissolved on the 29th,—a day on which many a heart throbbed, and many an eye was moistened, at the thought that all was now over, and the beloved and venerated old Kirk of Scotland rent in twain.

¹ Annual Register, 1843, p. 253.

The noble and animating feature of this ecclesiastical revolution is that which is found on all such occasions,—the Spirit of the movement. disinterestedness of the movers. Of that heroic disinterestedness there never was, or could be, any question. The seceders were violent in their partisanship, and unjust in their judgments of those whom they left behind: they had the faults of a revolutionary era; but their earnestness and their spirit of self-sacrifice were sublime. As early as that memorable May week, there were 500 clergy, who had left home, neighbors, station, and competence, and thrown themselves into a position where they might have to endure poverty for the rest of their lives, and could not escape much tribulation and toil. And they were well supported by a host as earnest as themselves,—by men and women who were ready to spend and be spent in the cause. While the difficulties remained which were occasioned by the refusal of land-owners to grant sites for churches, aged men and tender women attended worship, like the old Covenanters, in frost and rain,—under the tempests and heats of summer, and the blasts and snows of winter, on the sea-shore, in the wild ravine, and on the exposed hill-side. Several of the large proprietors held out for a long time, naturally doubting whether they ought to grant aid of any kind to parties who had, as they supposed, set up against the government and the law-courts. But these not only became better aware of what is due to religious liberty, but took warning from the frequent rising-up of the question, what right any man could have to hold land so as to keep back God's earth, to the last corner, from worshippers who wanted merely space to kneel on. When it was seen that this High-Church movement might generate an agrarian agitation, the seceders were indulged with a choice of sites for their churches.

Thus did Scotland lead the way in proving the principle of Church Establishments, in alliance with the State. There is a general feeling that the affair is not over,—that the Establishment in Scotland now remains a mere temporary arrangement; and that the Establishment in England and Ireland must sooner or later come into question in somewhat a similar way.

In the English Establishment, the disturbances whose first outbreak has been described, became more threatening and more painful from year to year. It could not be otherwise; for the differences between the three parties in the Church were fundamental; and their controversies must be brought to an issue before unity and tranquillity could be restored. One of the most significant circumstances in connection with the religious state of the nation is, that dissent appears to have gained nothing by the divisions in the Establishment.

The religious world in England.

While the High-Churchmen were mourning over the certain destruction of the Church from the interference of the government with it; and while the Low-Church party ^{Churchmen.} were denouncing the influence of the world, and struggling to revive religion by building churches,—as if the spirit could be created by forms, instead of forms being the manifestation of the spirit; and while Dr. Arnold was writing, “I groan over the divisions of the Church. . . . I begin now to think that things must be worse before they are better, and that nothing but some great pressure from without will make Christians cast away their idols of sectarianism,—the worst and most mischievous by which Christ’s Church has ever been plagued;” while such were the lamentations of Churchmen of every order, we find ^{Dissenters.} the Dissenters stating, with solemn grief, in their annual reports, that their numbers and their zeal were fearfully declining. At the Wesleyan Conference in 1845, the decrease of members was declared to exceed 5,000. The New Connection of Wesleyans announced a decrease also, and directed an inquiry into the causes, and “a prayerful consideration” of them. “The event,” they declared, “ought to be regarded as a source of deep abasement and sorrow before God.” In the same year, the committee of the Baptist Union announced, that the condition of their churches was, where not stationary, retrograde. Of their 507 churches, 142 had “suffered a clear diminution,” — “a fact which is fitted,” they say, “to give rise to serious and salutary reflection.” At the meeting of the Congregational Union, the denomination was announced to be “diminishing rather than increasing.” The same appears to have been true about some of the smaller sects. The Quakers had, for some time before this, been generally relaxing the practical obligation to wear the dress, and use the peculiar speech, of their sect. Their leaders mourned the necessity, but declared that the preservation of these observances was now found to cost more than they were worth. Discontent and resentment had become common among the young, who found “their cross” too hard to bear; and they would break bounds, and desert their sect, if this much indulgence were not granted them. So, from this time it must become more and more uncommon to see young faces under the neat drab bonnet and the broad brim; and it seemed probable, that, in two or three more generations, the Quaker garb would be seen only in old prints. The Catholics alone appear to have been decidedly increasing in numbers during this season of discouragement to Protestant sects; and their further increase was provided for by the going-over of a considerable number of the High-Church party into their communion.

The records of the time show how the contending religious

parties strove to gain upon each other by bearing to the utmost upon those points of doubt and compromise which in ordinary times are approached fearfully and tenderly. The Church-rate struggle went on; and we find an unusual number of refusals to marry and to bury, on account of supposed non-compliance with the conditions of the Church.¹ In 1841, a suit was brought against a Lincolnshire clergyman by parents whose child he had refused to bury; the refusal being based on the ground that the child was really unbaptized, having being baptized only by a Wesleyan minister. The judgment, which was given against the clergyman, proceeded on the ground that lay-baptism was not denounced as a corruption at the Reformation, when an enumeration of corruptions was made; and no clergyman could take upon himself to pronounce any baptism invalid which was not declared so by the framers of the Rubric. The clergyman appealed, but this judgment was affirmed; and the Tractarians did not think the better of Protestantism for such a result. The Bishop of Exeter was one of the most conspicuous movers during the period of Church disturbance. We find him, in 1844, suspending one of his clergy for a term, for having omitted some words of Christian assurance in the burial-service, when interring a man supposed to have died in a state of intoxication.² The supposition was a mistake; but the Bishop declared, that, if it had not been so, the liberty taken would have been no less reprehensible. This is very well, as discountenancing the notion that any man can undertake to condemn the dead; and the moral mischief of promising future bliss alike to the good and bad remains chargeable upon the appointment of an inflexible ritual. From this time, the bishop seems to have held his power of ecclesiastical censure always in his hand, ready for use; and his clergy and their flocks were thus stimulated to a contention which soon became a scandal too gross to be endured. He took occasion by one of these quarrels to draw up and promulgate an order of observance of doctrine and ritual, consisting of ten points, which certainly did not conduce to the restoration of peace in the Church.³ He laid down the law about preaching in the surplice, about postures and forms, and goings-out and comings-in, and refusal of burial and of the sacraments, in a fashion which irresistibly reminds the reader of the most emphatic descriptions of Pharisaic observances in the Gospels; and no one out of the diocese was surprised to hear in a few weeks of actual riots in the churches and streets of Exeter. The clergy began to baptize in the midst of the service; and this seems to have been unresisted: but, when they appeared in the surplice to preach, those

¹ Annual Register, Law Cases, p. 364.

² Annual Register, 1844, Chron. 88.

³ Annual Register, 1844, p. 125.

hearers who feared the introduction of popish forms left the churches, Sunday after Sunday.¹ The clergy persevered: the people held parish meetings, where they proposed to appeal to the body of prelates, and to the Queen in council, "for a settlement of this uncalled-for disturbance." The clergy were hooted in the streets; and the interior of the churches presented a spectacle very unlike that of devotional tranquillity. During January, 1845, the evil increased so that the bishop and the most obstinate of his clergy were compelled to yield. The Church of St. Sidwell's was so noisy, that prayers could not be heard: the congregation rose in a body on the appearance of the surplice, and many went out. Two thousand people were collected outside to hoot the pastor; and it was with difficulty that a strong body of police protected him to his lodgings. It will be seen at once, that the contention was not, in fact, about vestments and forms, but about something far more serious, — the question, namely, whether the compromises of the composite Protestant Church should be respected, as allowing such liberty of expansion, and difference of views and observance, as are rendered necessary by change of times; or whether the forms of a past century should be adhered to with a rigidity which must compel either a rupture of the Protestant, or a return to the Catholic Church. A truce was obtained in Exeter by the Bishop yielding, and instructing his clergy to yield, for the sake of peace.

Forcibly as such proceedings pressed themselves on public attention, the strongest interest of the crisis lay at Oxford, where matters could no longer go on as they At Oxford. had done for some years. The bishops seemed no nearer than ever to agreement among themselves, nor to fitness to deal with the controversy of the time. One recommended peace; as if peace or truce were possible after the appeal had once been made to principle and conscience. Others strove hard to take no notice. Others left their clergy to act, each on his own conscience. No one of them can be found to have made anywhere a plain statement of the controversy, as between the Tractarian party and the other two Church sects, or as between the Church of Rome and that of England, together with a declaration on the one side or the other. The Bishop of Oxford interfered to prohibit the issue of the tracts, after the appearance of No. XC., which contained doctrine too nearly approaching to Romanism in the matter of private judgment to be allowed to pass under the eye of a Protestant bishop. From this time, the Tractarian leaders were regarded with a disapprobation, on the part of all single-minded persons, which must compel their speedy retreat from the position they held as, in Dr. Arnold's words, "Roman Catholics at Oxford

¹ Annual Register, 1844, p. 146.

instead of at Oscott, — Roman Catholics signing the articles of a Protestant Church, and holding offices in its ministry.”¹ From this time (1841), they were sure to be keenly watched, and every opportunity seized for dislodging them from a position which they were conceived to hold treacherously. Those who wished well to the Church would have been glad to see something else done, besides this necessary but low and disagreeable work; but they were obliged to be contented with witnessing the Tractarians compelled to see and acknowledge that they were Romanists, and with discovering, that, when they were gone, a “re-action” must ensue, as injurious to the integrity and reputation and usefulness of the Church, as any of the changes that had occurred.

Dr. Pusey was the first of the sect chosen for punishment.

Dr. Pusey. Being called on to preach before the University in the spring of 1843, he discoursed on the Eucharist, and was considered by some of his hearers to utter Romish doctrine about transubstantiation and the mass. The subject was brought before a Board of Convocation; and their report was such as to compel the Vice-chancellor to suspend Dr. Pusey from preaching within the precincts of the University for two years. The accused demanded a hearing, and liberty of arguing the matter; without which he declared the sentence to be “unstatutable, as well as unjust.”² His protest was, of course, disregarded. Dr.

Dr. Hampden. Hampden, himself a sufferer not long before, from inquisition into his opinions, did now what he could, as Regius Professor of Divinity, to guard the Church from false doctrine. He proposed to a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, subjects for exercises which must test his opinions on transubstantiation and the authority of tradition.³ The candidate refused to write on these subjects, and claimed the right to select his own. Dr. Hampden prevented his obtaining his degree. The candidate sued him in the Vice-chancellor’s Court, but failed in his suit. Much regret was caused by this proceeding; for it was dangerous. It led too surely to a recognition of the incompatibility between the service of the Church and the right of private judgment.

Mr. Ward. In the same year, a Mr. Ward, a clergyman, published a book called “The Ideal of a Christian Church Considered,” some of which was declared to be inconsistent with the Thirty-nine Articles; and he was called before Convocation to answer for his work. The remarkable scene of his degradation took place on the 13th of February, when several bishops, and lay-lords and commoners, conspicuous in the religious world, crowded into Oxford, and intermingled with above a thousand clergymen in the hall. Mr. Ward’s argument

¹ Life, ii. p. 279.

² Annual Register, 1843, Chron. 67.

³ Annual Register, 1844, Chron. 3.

was, that the Articles could not be conscientiously signed by any considerable number of persons, if they were taken in "a natural sense;" and he therefore contended for "a non-natural sense," as the only method of meeting an inevitable difference of views. Mr. Ward's degradation was carried by a small majority; the numbers being 569 to 511.¹ Beside Mr. Ward stood the Rev. F. Oakeley, a fellow of the same college, and minister of the Margaret-street Chapel. He dared the Bishop of London to move in accordance with Oxford, by writing to him an avowal, that he believed, though he did not teach, several of the doctrines of the Romish Church, and that he claimed liberty to hold his own opinions, while not injuring the Church, which he desired to serve.² He challenged the bishop to institute proceedings against him for subscribing the Articles in the same sense as Mr. Ward. The bishop instituted proceedings in the Court of Arches. Mr. Oakeley declined to defend himself in that court; and, on the other hand, the bishop declined to accept his resignation while the suit was pending. The judge decided that Mr. Oakeley had rendered himself liable to ecclesiastical censure. He was deprived of his license, forbidden to preach till he should have retracted his errors, and condemned to pay costs.

These unseemly and painful transactions excited a spirit of jealous watchfulness elsewhere. A book published by a clergyman was the occasion of a charge of unfaithfulness to the Book of Common Prayer; and the author was reprimanded by the judge in the Arches Court, and suspended for three years. And next we find the churchwardens of Richmond complaining to the archdeacon of the officiating pastors, that, under the sanction of the bishop of the diocese, and on the plea of custom, they failed to observe some of the particulars of the Rubric.³ To those who had read history, and understood the laws of opinion, it was clear that the Church was far from being served by proceedings which drove men back upon the principles of private judgment; and they saw, that, whenever the Tractarians should have quitted Oxford for Rome, they would leave behind them no small number, who, perceiving the impossibility of establishing uniformity of belief, would be as willing to hold station and maintenance in the Church, without holding its doctrines, as the men who had been driven out. The process of going over to Rome now began in earnest. Many became Catholic priests before Mr. Newman himself, who had long been a Romanist in every thing but profession. When he resigned his Protestant holdings, he was followed by a crowd. Here and there, a benefited clergyman, and a host of curates, and laymen of all ranks,

¹ Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 31.

² Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 95.

³ Annual Register, 1843, Chron. 159.

with their families, took the decisive step, and told their friends, or late parishioners, that they had found "the Church,"—had been received into "the Church,"—and could look with compassion on the members of a schismatical and pretended Church, which merely deluded its adherents to perdition.

After this riddance, it was hoped that the Church would revive and spread. But it did not. The events of late years had greatly stimulated the clergy, and improved the character of their ministrations. But the complaint still was and is, that the people do not enter the Church, and find in it the life that it assumes to be able to give. Time will show whether this is owing to the re-action following upon the Catholic movement, or whether lapse of centuries and change of circumstances have made the Church, as now constituted, unsuitable to the needs of those to whom, distinctively, the gospel was preached in its first days. Great efforts were made by the zealous and the opulent to propagate Christianity abroad, and to establish churches in our foreign dependencies, and to build new churches and send out more clergy at home: the number of new churches built during the movement—not a few by the beneficence of individuals—is indeed remarkable; but the old edifices were left as empty as before, and no evidences have appeared of any redemption of the mass of people from ignorance and indifference. While thus the failure of the Church to perform its work was clearly not owing to any lack of zeal and generosity in the upper classes, it seems that Lord Henley and Dr. Arnold, and other Church reformers, must have been right in supposing that the old structure was no longer suited to the needs of the time, but must be extensively altered and enlarged.

Just when government was taking to heart this state of things, and was about to propose to amend it, Dr. Arnold was called away. It was in the midst of the dissensions and the weakness of the Church,—dissensions and weakness which had caused him the severest pain of his life,—that he was suddenly withdrawn from the scene in which he had wrought so actively. His desires for reform had caused him to be held in fear and hatred by the High-Church party; and his language in regard to the Evangelical party was never such as to conciliate their good-will. At the same time, he was too much of a Churchman, and had tampered too much with his own mind in early life with regard to subscription to the Articles, to have any power of appreciating the principles and position of the Dissenters. It was, therefore, only with the Moderate Church that he could be in cordial communion; and, owing to the independence of his views, and the peremptory manner in which he issued them, he was feared and disliked by many of

Death of
Dr. Arnold.

his own Church party, as strongly as he was honored and adored by others. It is on other grounds than his relation to the Church that his posthumous reputation rests. He was the most earnest public man of his time,—of a time when earnestness was supremely needed and was sadly deficient. He presented the spectacle of a man of not only blameless, but exalted and holy life, who lived wholly and solely for what seemed to him truth and good. It was and is felt to be a pity, that his views of truth and good were impaired by narrowness of view and of experience, and by a want of knowledge of men and affairs; so that his earnestness led him to devise and judge and insist on matters, and for persons and classes, which he did not understand,—as when he would have made a declaration of Christian belief an indispensable requisite to the full enjoyment of political and social rights; a method which would have acted as a premium on hypocrisy, and have done violence to some of the best consciences in the community: but such defects did not neutralize the value of his earnestness and transparent sincerity, conspicuous as they were in the midst of the indifference or the formalism and insincerity of the time. And he communicated this earnestness and sincerity to a large number of those who are becoming the men of a later time. As an educator, he put his heart into his work, and labored there as elsewhere for truth and good. The views which he considered invaluable may not be in every case held by those whom he trained to hold ideas on conviction only; points which he insisted on as indispensable may appear otherwise to his pupils in their maturity: but they owe to him the power and the conscience to think for themselves, and the earnest habit of mind which makes their conviction a part of their life. By this exalted view and method as an educator, Dr. Arnold did more for education than even by his express and unintermitting assertion of the importance of the function,—powerful as his testimony was. At the head of Rugby School, he had large opportunities both for testimony and action; and what he did will never be forgotten. His life was a public blessing while it lasted; and it has become more so since his death: for his virtues and his toils are not now, as when he lived, obscured by the local and temporary strifes which always prevent men from doing justice to each other, and vitiate the noblest perspective of character, rendering prominent what need be scarcely seen, and hiding the grandest features behind mere magnified accidents. The horror with which he and the Tractarian leaders spoke of each other is forgotten now. Those leaders have found their Church; and he is seen to have been the man required in his place by the moral wants of the age,—as conspicuously a public benefactor as worthy of the love and reverence which

waited upon his private life. He died in 1842, the day before the completion of his forty-seventh year.

In the midst of the government action for bringing the Church and the people together, another clergyman died, whose Death of Sydney Smith. view of Church matters was more secular than any held by the ecclesiastical reformers of the time. It seems strange that Sydney Smith should ever have been in the Church; and it is far from strange, that earnest ecclesiastics should have been scandalized at his method of treatment of some matters which were to them as solemn and serious as the gospel. He was in truth a moralist, and not a religious guide; and he could as little conceive of a spiritual call to the clerical office, as his enemies could give him credit for earnestness about the matters which appeared to him most serious. In his letters about the ecclesiastical commission, he speaks throughout of the "prizes" in the Church as the inducement to men to go into it, and he never appears to conceive of any higher impulsion; but perhaps few of the most spiritual and devoted ministers of the Church have so fervently, constantly, and powerfully advocated the interests of duty, and shown the beauty of the things that are honest, pure, lovely, and of good report. It does not follow, that, because he was the greatest wit of his time, and of strong social inclinations, he was spoiled. He could admonish and satirize the great, as well as the lowly; and his sympathies were always on the side of the suffering and oppressed. His advocacy was always on behalf of the liberal and progressive side of the questions of the day. He quizzed Dissenters and Churchmen all round, exhibiting fanaticism, worldliness, bigotry, and all manner of foibles, wherever he saw them, but always aiding the claimants of freedom of opinion. He quizzed all the parties concerned about Catholic emancipation; but he did more for the Catholics than perhaps any divine ever did before for a body under disqualification for religious opinion. He felt too strongly about negro slavery to quizz the parties in that case; but his wit there took the form of a branding indignation, an impassioned irony, which might pierce the brain and marrow of the oppressor. That his name was always connected with the "Edinburgh Review," of which he was one of the founders, shows that his position in the Church was that of alliance with the government; and he openly regarded the Church as an institution for the teaching and training of the people in Christian morality, with the support, and under the sanction, of the government. His views appear to have prompted him to the duty of a good pastor in his country residence; for, while he was eagerly sought in London society, and his writings keenly read wherever they could make their way, he was welcomed on his return home by the humblest of

his neighbors, — the old men and women, to whom, as he said, he gave good things for their rheumatism, without any mixture of the Thirty-nine Articles. If it be granted that he was a moralist, and by no means a divine, it may be considered a matter of congratulation that the Church had, in a season of great peculiarity, a minister who waged effectual war against cant and fanaticism, and who, closely connected with ruling statesmen, lifted up his voice, without fear or favor, for justice and reasonableness on every hand. He rebuked Whig statesmen, when he thought them tampering with the property of the clergy, as soundly as any Wesleyan fanatic or Tractarian formalist; and one such plain-speaking logician and wit might be welcomed to a place in the ranks of the clergy, — especially under the certainty that such another would never appear in one age. He held a living of moderate value in Somersetshire, and was made a canon residentiary of St. Paul's in 1831, when he was already growing old. He died, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, in February, 1845, while contemplating with some amusement, and something of the contempt with which old age views new enterprises, the attempts of government and zealous members of the Church to bring the Establishment more effectually within reach of the popular need.

On the 5th of May, 1843, Sir R. Peel offered a project to Parliament, of which he said as follows: — “The <sup>Augmen-
tation of
clergy.</sup> proceeding I shall place the Church of England in a favorable light before the people of this country, and conciliate towards it that favor and affection to which I believe it to be justly entitled, and lay the foundation of extended usefulness.¹ Those foundations must be widened. It is in vain that you have the splendid cathedrals, and bishops highly endowed, — in vain you have dignitaries and splendid edifices, — if you fail to impress on the people the conviction that great practical advantages are to be derived from them. Unless in populous districts you bring the ministrations of the Church within the reach of the people, it is in vain that you support its dignitaries; for the polished columns of the temple will not be secure, unless you widen the basis on which they rest. Here is the point in which the Church of England is wanting at present: her parochial constitution was made in other times, and suited to other states of the people; you must divide parishes, and bring ministers into them, and you will thus add at once to the respectability, to the influence, and to the property of the Church, by applying her present property to strengthen her position, and increase her influence.” All that could be done by preparation and arrangement was to be attempted now. The

¹ Hansard, lxviii. p. 1316.

body was to be made ready, if the spirit would but come. Thus much it was right to do, that, if the Church should finally fail to redeem the masses of the people, the failure might be through no neglect of their rulers. And the proposal of the Minister was so well received as to obviate all difficulty and all waste of time. "My examination into the management of Church property," he said on this occasion, "leads me to think that there may be very material improvements in its administration." The proposal was to bring into combined operation the Boards of Ecclesiastical Commissioners and of Queen Anne's bounty, by a method which would largely increase the means of augmenting small livings, and afford funds for providing a considerable addition to the numbers of the clergy. The Minister did not propose to spend any of the money on new churches, as the last few years had shown how much could be done by the zeal of individuals and private society. To follow up the recent church-building by making permanent endowments for ministers was the object. The House agreed unanimously to the project.

It was not only at home that Church extension was to be promoted. In 1841, the prelates of England and Ireland Colonial
bishops. agreed on an appeal to the religious public for the raising of a fund for founding colonial bishoprics; and, in the next year, the Bishop of London directed his clergy, in a pastoral letter, to have collections made in their churches for the purpose, recommending the ancient method, now revived by the Tractarian clergy, of making these offerings a part of the service.¹ In August of the same year (1842), five colonial bishops were consecrated in Westminster Abbey, — their sees being that of Barbadoes (not new), and the four new ones of Antigua, Guiana, Gibraltar, and Tasmania (Van Diemen's Land). The Bishop of New Zealand had already sailed for his distant diocese. A bishopric had been established at Jerusalem, in 1841, under the joint auspices of Prussia and England, — a scheme of much less promise than the formation of colonial sees. British subjects residing in British territory have a clear right of access to the services of the National Church; but it is quite a different thing to plant a missionary Church in a country where the Christian religion is despised by inhabitants of two races, who have each a faith of their own, which they value as highly as the stranger can value his. By the very nature of the Mohammedan and Jewish faiths, their sincere and enlightened votaries cannot undergo conversion; and the scheme has, thus far, had no success which can justify its continuance. The institution of the Jerusalem mission stands as a curious instance of zeal for Church

¹ Annual Register, 1842, Chron. 39

extension abroad, at a time when the Church was practically in a state of painful and depressing feebleness at home.

The plan of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to constitute bishoprics at Ripon and Manchester by consolidating the sees of Bristol and Gloucester, and of St. Asaph and Bangor, met with a revived opposition in 1843. Every one agreed that the establishment of the see of Ripon was a public benefit, and every one desired to see a Bishop of Manchester. But there were three objections, moved by different parties, to the carrying-out of the plan. The Earl of Powis, who brought forward the subject in the House of Lords, insisted that the Welsh bishoprics were wanted, with all their revenues, for the Welsh.¹ The High-Church party continued their protests against the government and its commission touching any of the ancient bishoprics at all; but the greatest difficulty — that which was admitted in the debates to be at the bottom of the opposition — was the proposal, that any English bishop should be inadmissible to the House of Lords. The Duke of Wellington manfully avowed that any increase in the number of bishops in the House would excite great jealousy throughout the country; and the Archbishop of Canterbury advocated the plan of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; but the Bishop of London adverted to the fact, that all bishops sit in Parliament in virtue of their baronies, and dreaded lest the omission of any of them should in time generate a desire to dispense with the parliamentary duty of the bishops altogether. The Bishop of Exeter wished for more bishops, both in the country and in the House; but suggested that a parliamentary attendance by rotation, as in the case of the Irish prelates, might be arranged. Among the other bishops there was a remarkable variety of opinions; and the result of the discussion was, that Lord Powis withdrew his Bill, with a promise to bring it forward again next session.

Before the next session, the Welsh disturbances had occurred; and this gave an advantage to the parties for whom the Earl of Powis was spokesman. There had before been many petitions against the union of the sees; and now there were more still, — from the clergy throughout the country, and from all classes in Wales, — no doubt under the influence of their clergy. In Parliament, the ground of debate still was the increase or diminution of the number of bishops in the House; the Bishop of Bangor actually venturing to remind the nation, that there was a time when forty bishops sat with a small number of lay-peers, thirty or forty mitred abbots having seats in the House.² That, however, was before Manchester, and the two millions who now needed a bishop there, existed; and the Archbishop of Canter-

¹ Hansard, lxi. 756.

² Hansard, lxxv. p. 499.

bury still thought, that those two millions ought to be considered before the 350,000 Welsh who were now divided between two sees; and the four archdeacons to be given to Wales would amply suffice, with one bishop. The second reading of Lord Powis's Bill for repealing the arrangement of the commission was carried; but its progress was then stopped by a very unusual proceeding. On the 1st of July, the Duke of Wellington declared that the Bill touched the prerogative of the Crown, and that he was not authorized to give the consent of the Sovereign to its further discussion.¹ A committee, appointed to search for precedents, reported that the fact was indeed as the Duke of Wellington had stated; and Lord Powis therefore withdrew his Bill, declaring that the matter could not rest here. This was indeed evident enough; for the question was assuming the aspect of a contest between the government and the Church,—such a contest as was becoming more significant and more dangerous with every new dispute. Before the debate was closed on the present occasion, it was carefully made known by the law-lords that the Sovereign had no power to stop discussion in either House of Parliament; and that the intimation just made was to be understood as a timely hint that the royal assent would not be given to any measure which might result from the debate. In the next session, the Bill of Lord Powis was thrown out by a large majority on the first division. In the session of 1846, the opposition of the Crown was withdrawn, and the Bill passed the Lords; but it was dropped in the Lower House, on a promise from the new Minister, Lord John Russell, that the government would consider the subject before another session.² In due time, the new see of Manchester was provided with a bishop; and then the sees of Bangor and St. Asaph were allowed to remain apart. But the contest between the government and the Church was renewed on a more perilous ground,—that of the appointment of a bishop to the see of Hereford. One of the compromises involved in the union of the Church and State was in question in this case; and the Minister, Lord J. Russell, apparently unaware of the peril of the part he took, cast aside the delicacy usually observed by statesmen in approaching that particular compromise, and pushed the claim of the royal prerogative to an extent most galling and offensive to the Church, in insisting on the election of Dr. Hampden to the see of Hereford. This is the latest instance of Church and State conflict; but every one knows that it cannot be the last. While waiting for the next occasion, our statesmen have the warning of the Church of Scotland before them,—a warning against bearing hard on old compromises, unless they are pre-

¹ Hansard, lxxvi. p. 124.

² Hansard, lxxxviii. p. 286.

pared for a new revolution,—a warning of what men will do and sacrifice for principle when their religious powers and privileges are believed by them to be in danger,—a warning against the notion that the bulk of any nation can regard the Church of its faith as an instrument of mere religious police under the direction of the government. A Church must be more than this, or it must presently be nothing; and, because it must be more than this if any thing, it is clear that its alliance with the State can subsist only as long as a spirit of benevolent moderation is devoutly cherished on both sides.

A singular incident which occurred during this critical period is an illustration of such a spirit exercised by a High-Churchman of eminence. Dr. Hook, vicar of Leeds, honorably distinguished by a vast sacrifice of patronage to the interests of the Church, was brought into close connection with the Chartists of the town, by the determination of that body to elect churchwardens from their own body. They did so in 1842; and, when the election of 1843 was to take place, Dr. Hook declared on the spot, that he must say that they were the only body of churchwardens who had conducted themselves in an honorable, straightforward, and gentlemanly manner.¹ They told him fairly, that they differed from him on many points; but declared, that, if they undertook the office, they would conscientiously strive to discharge its duties. They had done so; and he could not therefore wish for better churchwardens, unless the persons assembled would let him have some from among the members of the Established Church. Would they do so? The meeting answered in the negative; and, when the vicar read over a list of names, those of the Chartists were carried with acclamation, and their election was received with a good grace. It must have been a singular scene.

During this period, occasion arose for testing the principles of the Administration in regard to religious liberty,—an ^{Dissenters'} occasion which involved a question of great nicety, ^{Chapels Bill.} and therefore a test of unusual decisiveness. The excitement throughout the kingdom was very strong; and indeed the controversy about Dissenters' endowments was the prominent one, in connection with Parliament, of 1844. It was scarcely possible that the ministers could have foreseen how their proposition would become the basis of a religious movement; but when it did, and when the movement assumed all the violence which belongs to religious movements in critical times, they held their ground calmly and firmly, as protectors of justice, showing throughout a sensibility to religious liberty which won for them such esteem from the enlightened portion of the people as

¹ Annual Register, 1843, Chron. 53.

abundantly compensated for the loss of support from the bigoted and the half-informed who made up the opposition. It was, in fact, a case in which there could not be two opinions among honest men fully informed of the facts. But a multitude of honest zealots were not fully informed of the facts; and they carried on a most formidable resistance under a wrong impression. The story was this:—

In the reign of Charles II., a certain Lady Hewley left certain manors in York in trust to support “godly preachers of Christ’s holy gospel.” The lady herself had, of course, no idea that a doubt would ever arise as to what sort of “preachers” her bequest was intended to benefit. They must be Dissenters; for the clergy of the Romish and English churches were never called “preachers” in her time; and she was well known to be herself a Dissenter, and devoted to dissenting interests. Unitarians were not heard of in her day; and, if heard of, they would have been called, by Lady Hewley among other Trinitarians, blasphemers, or any thing rather than “godly preachers of Christ’s holy gospel.” But the religious body to which Lady Hewley belonged was that which has since become, by gradual change, the Unitarian body of the present day. Naturally and necessarily, they have baptized their infants and buried their dead in the chapels endowed by Lady Hewley’s fund; and that fund naturally and inevitably contributed to the support of the young ministers who went forth from the congregations worshipping in those chapels. Of late years, however, Dissenters sprung from a sect to which Lady Hewley did not belong, but who conceived themselves to hold the opinions professed by her when she made her will, thought that their ministers and congregations ought to be the recipients of her bequest, and that the Unitarians had forfeited their right to hold it when they relinquished the doctrine which she considered that of “Christ’s holy gospel.” A report of the charity commissioners sanctioned the inquiry; and a Bill was filed in Chancery to dispossess the Unitarians. The judges of the court decided against the Unitarians, who appealed to the Lords. The Lords required the opinion of the twelve judges. With the exception of one of their number, Maule, the judges were unanimous in their opinion,—delivered in June, 1842,—that the Unitarians were excluded from the bequest, and that the property ought to belong to the Trinitarian Protestant Dissenters.¹ The Lords, of course, affirmed the judgment of the Court of Chancery. After a litigation of fourteen years, this decision was pronounced in August, 1842. After all, it settled nothing but the exclusion of the Unitarians, and left the property unappropriated.²

¹ Annual Register, 1842, Chron. 108.

² Annual Register, 1842, Chron. 135.

The difficulties of this case were produced by lapse of time and consequent changes of opinion, and not by fault on any hand; but they were difficulties of so serious a kind, that the government saw the necessity of preventing their perpetual recurrence by an Act which should forbid the unsettlement of ancient property, and disorganizing quarrels about such property, on every material change of opinion in religious sects. It was a bad thing, that an interest in property should be directly implicated with particular opinions. It was a bad thing, that any sect should be under temptation to covet the property of another. It was a bad thing, that an honest change of opinion should involve the penalty of surrendering the graves of ancestors, the old places of family worship, and all the religious haunts which are at least as dear to Nonconformists, whose fathers have suffered for their faith, as the most solemn cathedral and the most venerable ivied church in the country can be to those who worship there. It is bad, that, as in the Hewley case, years of litigation should consume funds and irritate tempers, and leave a painful doubt at last whether justice can ever be done; whether, if the holders cannot be said to have a right to the property, it can ever be certainly decided, by any judges on earth, that it ought to be given to anybody else. To obviate such mischiefs as these, the government brought a Bill before Parliament which should confirm to all religious bodies the possession of the property which they had held for the preceding twenty years. The Lord Chancellor brought in this Bill; and, though it was opposed by a few bishops and lay-lords, it passed the Upper House by a considerable majority.¹ During the debate, however, an agitation had been begun which soon extended to almost every town in England, convoked public meetings where violent resolutions were carried, and loaded the table of the House of Commons with as many petitions as had gone up against Sir James Graham's educational clauses. The reason of the violence was, that the Bill was supposed to be devised for the benefit of the Unitarians. The supposition was a mistake; but it was natural enough in persons who were not well informed in regard to some preceding legislation.

It was not only that Lady Hewley's case had furnished the warning and suggestion on which the Ministerial Bill proceeded. The first clause had a special bearing on Unitarian property. In 1813, the exceptions in the Act of Toleration — exceptions which affected the Unitarians exclusively — were repealed; and, from that time, the Unitarians were as firmly assured in the possession of religious trust-property as any other sect. But, by an omission, the Act had not been made retrospective; and therefore,

¹ Hansard, lxxiv. p. 831.

though the property of Unitarians instituted since 1813 was safe, they were at the mercy of litigation for all that had been in their hands from an earlier date. The first clause of the present Bill went merely to repair this omission; but the dissenting sects which contemplated claiming Unitarian property, as in the Hewley case, made an outcry that government was intercepting property which should soon become theirs, and settling it in preference upon the Unitarians. The matter was clearly explained by the Attorney-general, when he introduced the Bill in the Commons on the 6th of June.¹ He showed how, in the case of the Roman Catholics, similar assurance had been made retrospective, as a matter of course; and declared that the present Bill was prepared on the recommendation of the ecclesiastical commissioners, and had been supported by all the legal authorities in the House of Lords. The Prime Minister's speech was as frank and manly on behalf of justice as the action of his government on the occasion. He had not based his proceeding, he said, on the legal doctrines or historical truths brought forward so abundantly in the debate.² His feeling was, that, if any legal doctrine existed by which chapels held by any class of Dissenters could be taken from them, and given away elsewhere, the first thing to be done was to amend such a legal rule.

While the clamor was loud throughout the "religious world," as the petitioners called themselves, outside the walls of Parliament, there was a remarkable preponderance of argument, ability, and political character within the House in favor of the government Bill,—a preponderance so remarkable as to be observed upon as unexampled by both Sir R. Peel and Lord J. Russell. The votes went with the argument, the majority for the third reading being 120 in a House of 282. Some slight amendments having been made in committee, the Bill was returned to the Lords, when the Bishop of London made another effort to renew the dispute, on the ground that the House of Commons did not represent the religious opinion of the nation.³ He did not perceive the danger of his own blindness to the fact, that this was not a question of religious opinion, but of security of property,—which no one could deny to be the proper business of the House of Commons. Though his endeavor to throw out the Bill was zealously supported by a few Peers who shared the misconceptions prevalent out of doors, it was negatived by a majority of 161 in a House of 243; and the Bill presently became law.⁴ From this time, places of worship which were not by the terms of the trust destined unmistakably for a particular sect were to remain the property of the body which had held them

¹ Hansard, lxxv. pp. 321, 324.

³ Hansard, lxxvi. p. 116.

² Hansard, lxxv. p. 383.

⁴ Hansard, lxxvi. p. 820.

for twenty preceding years, — a settlement as conducive to social peace as consonant to justice. What the consequences would have been if the Bill had been surrendered to popular clamor, and a mass of dissenting property had been, in effect, thrown to the religious multitude to be scrambled for, in virtue of omissions and short-comings of the law, some of the speakers ventured to hint, but none professed to describe.

Another act of the period, promotive of justice and of social peace, was the relief of Jews from municipal disabilities. This relief was the direct act of the government. Relief to
Jews. The Lord Chancellor brought in a Bill, early in the session of 1845, for removing certain tests by which Jews were excluded from some municipal offices, while others remained open to them. Five Jewish gentlemen were at that time magistrates, — some for several counties; some were deputy-lieutenants, and all might be high-sheriff. If they refused to serve the office of sheriff in London, they were subject to a fine; yet they were excluded from the office of alderman — which is considered the compensation or reward for having discharged the onerous duties of the shrievalty — by a clause in the declaration which could be subscribed to only by a Christian; this clause itself dating only from 1828. In some towns, the disability was evaded by management and subterfuge; but this did not mend the case. It is scarcely credible how much could be found to be said against a relief so reasonable and necessary as the one proposed; but the measure was carried with ease, being, as a fanatical member of the Commons House observed, in a state of panic, “completely of a piece with several other measures which had passed the House during the last two sessions.” The last two sessions had indeed proved that the existing Administration was inferior to none that had preceded it in its enlightened regard for religious liberty.

CHAPTER X.

THE prospect was opening year by year to the British nation of a sufficient supply of food; or, at least, of a supply Canada corn question. not artificially restricted. The harvest of 1842 was abundant. The newspapers, during September of that year, tell of "immense quantities" of corn gathered in, and of a proportionate production on the continent; and, in October, there was a special thanksgiving in all places of worship throughout the kingdom. But there was an event of even happier promise than the abundant harvest. A letter from Lord Stanley to the Governor-general of Canada, dated in March of this year, shows that the earnest petitions of the Canadians for the free admission of their corn into Great Britain were favorably regarded by the government.¹ The Colonial Secretary granted assent to all the pleas in favor of free-trade between Canada and the mother-country; but pointed out, that, unless Canada chose to impose a duty on the importation of wheat and flour from the United States, Great Britain would in fact be supplied from the United States, *viâ* Canada, and the British corn-laws would become a mere sham. The Channel Islands had been all along permitted to send their agricultural produce free to England, with permission to buy for themselves wherever they could buy cheapest; but they owed this privilege to their small area of production, and the landed interest would not permit the extension of the liberty to so important a colony as Canada. Such were the explanations with which Lord Stanley accompanied his news, that government was about to lower the duty on Canadian wheat, and to permit the importation of Canadian flour into Ireland.

The broad hint given in this letter was immediately taken. The Canadians saw that the government at home did not choose to impose new duties on United-States produce imported into Canada; but that, if the colony herself chose to do so, she might consider the British government pledged to admit her wheat and flour free, or under a merely nominal duty; and a law was passed by the Canadian Legislature, without delay, by which American wheat was charged, from the 5th of July, 1843, with a duty of 3s. per quarter.

¹ Annual Register, 1842, p. 335.

So far, all was easy. But the affair was no sooner known in England, than "the landed interest" became extremely restless and anxious. At market-tables, at agricultural meetings, and wherever landlords and farmers met, it was hinted or proclaimed, that ministers were about to let in foreign corn by a back door, and to sink the corn-laws into an empty name. County members were instructed to be on the watch, and to put no blind trust in the Ministry, till it was seen how this matter would end. The dissatisfaction was so strong as to make the ministers regret, as the Colonial Secretary avowed, that they had no choice of time about introducing their plan to Parliament. As their promise to Canada bound them to propose their resolutions as early as possible, Lord Stanley could only deprecate the agitation, and explain away as much as he could of the alarm.¹ No wheat from the United States was to be admitted, — only flour made from it; which was as truly a Canadian manufacture as ostrich feathers were a French manufacture. The Canadians might live on United-States wheat, and send us all theirs; but so they might, at any time for fifteen years, — the only difference being that the duty was imposed now on the American frontier, instead of on our own shores. If we retained a duty of 1s. on Canadian wheat, and the Canadians paid a 3s. duty on United-States wheat, English wheat was still protected by a 4s. duty, which government believed would be an effectual protection. The change was proposed purely for the benefit of the Canadians, now settling down into a state of peaceful industry; and by no means for any advantage to the British consumer, as against the agriculturist at home. Though this was said very earnestly and ably, and though Lord Stanley had a high character as a Protectionist, the British consumer did believe that he should be the better for the change, and the British farmer did fear that he should be driven into a competition with the Americans. The news, with its attendant surmises, crept through the land, kindling hopeful smiles beside many a loom, and within the walls of many a cottage in town and country; and calling up dread in the mind of many a farmer who pondered how he could pay his rent if he was to be under-sold, in a shabby way, by an act of the same government which had already altered the sliding-scale in a spirit of favoritism to the consumer.

When Lord Stanley proposed his resolutions, he was opposed by some members of the Liberal party on the ground ^{Confusion of parties.} that he was establishing a new protection in Canada, and supported by others on the ground that the Canadians should be allowed to obtain all the corn they could get. There is no doubt that many votes were secured to the government by the

¹ Hansard, lxi. p. 577.

prevalent conviction of the danger of hurting and irritating the Canadians by annulling one of the first acts of their united Legislature; and, if Lord Stanley's resolutions had been rejected, the necessary consequence would have been the refusal of the royal assent to the Canadian Bill.¹ The resolutions were affirmed by a large majority. The debates in committee were chiefly remarkable for a confusion of parties such as indicated to impartial persons that a crisis was approaching. As usually happens when such confusion of parties takes place, there was violent recrimination. The Anti-corn-law Leaguers looked on with deep interest, and perceived that their cause was making rapid advances. In the Upper House, there were also opposite allegations against the measure. It introduced the practice of protection into the colonies, and must therefore be opposed; and, again, it must be opposed because it nullified the Protectionist arrangements of the preceding year. Lord Stanhope declared that these measures were only stepping-stones to the general adoption of free-trade principles, which ministers had consistently avowed; and others supported or denounced the measure as a recession from free-trade principles.² Amidst these contradictions, the Colonial Secretary's Bill passed the stage of debate in the Lords by a majority of 32 in a House of 82, and became law without delay.³

The Bill
passed.

By this time, there were large numbers of persons in a state of hope or fear from the conviction, that the existing government "had never attempted to conceal," as Lord Stanhope said, "their advance towards the full adoption of free-trade principles." Throughout the country, the preparations for the crisis were proceeding. Every parliamentary seat that became vacant was contested by the corn-law repealers; and every word that fell from ministers and their adherents in either House was watched and pondered. This state of expectation gave an interest to the corn-law debates, which would otherwise have been utterly wearisome, from the lack of novelty, and the preponderance of argument on one side. In March, Mr. Ward moved, unsuccessfully, for a committee to inquire whether there were any peculiar burdens on land, and, if so, what they were; and, in May, Mr. Villiers brought forward his annual motion for a committee of the whole House, to consider the operation of the corn-importation duties, with a view to their immediate abolition.⁴ The government declined further change while their last sliding-scale was new and untried; the Whig leaders and their adherents desired a fixed duty; and the Protectionists were awake and active in opposition to the motion, — yet the majority

¹ Hansard, lxi. p. 747.

³ Hansard, lxx. p. 608.

² Hansard, lxx. p. 578.

⁴ Hansard, lxvii. p. 877.

by which it was rejected was much less than in the preceding year: the numbers being, in 1842, 393 to 90; and now, 381 to 125.¹ In 1844, the majority on the same occasion again sank to 204; and the Protectionists began to calculate how long their corn-law could be preserved if their majority continued to sink at the rate of 50 in a year. The ministers, this time, as before, said that their new scale was not yet proved a failure; and that, till it was, they would countenance no change.² Sir R. Peel said that as he had before declared, so he would declare still, that the government had not contemplated, and did not now contemplate, any change in that corn-law which was settled two years since: but now, as before, he guarded himself against being understood to mean, that he would at all times, and under all circumstances, resist change; because that was a thing which no man ought to say on any matter of the kind.³ Lord J. Russell declined voting, on the ground that he was equally unwilling to have things go on as they were, and to throw open the trade in corn. Adhering to his own proposal of a fixed duty of 8s., he would not vote for any alternative. He was deserted now, however, by Lord Howick, who avowed himself an advocate of immediate repeal, as compromise was no longer possible.⁴ He saw that industry was inadequately rewarded; that both wages and profits were low; and that these results were mainly owing to restrictions on the importation of food. This was a remarkable fact; and there were other remarkable facts connected with this debate; but none of them, separately or collectively, were so notable as the line of defence taken by the Protectionists. Their speeches were almost wholly occupied by complaints or denunciations of the Anti-corn-law League.

The change within three years was indeed great. On the 25th of August, 1841, after the general election, and a few days before the resignation of the Whig Cabinet, in the course of the debate on the address in answer to the Queen's speech, the people's tale was for the first time fully and properly told in Parliament. Mr. Cobden had been sent up to the House as Richard
Cobden. representative of the bread-winners of the kingdom; and, on the first occasion of his rising, he told the story in a way which fixed the attention of every thoughtful observer of the times. When the daily papers of the 26th of August had reached their destinations throughout the island, there were meditative students, anxious invalids in their sick-chambers, watchful philosophers, and a host of sufferers from want, who felt that a new era in the history of England had opened, now that the people's tale had at last been told in the people's House of Parliament.

¹ Hansard, lxi. pp. 26-57.

³ Hansard, lxxv. p. 1529.

² Hansard, lxxv. p. 1549.

⁴ Hansard, lxxv. pp. 1433-1451.

Such observers as these, and multitudes more, asked of all who could tell them who this Richard Cobden was, and what he was like: and the answer was, that he was a member of a calico-printing firm in Manchester; that it was supposed that he would be an opulent man if he prosecuted business as men of business usually do; but that he gallantly sacrificed the pursuit of his own fortune, and his partners gallantly spared him to the public, for the sake of the great cause of corn-law repeal,—his experience, his liberal education, and his remarkable powers, all indicating him as a fitting leader in the enterprise. It was added that his countenance was grave, his manner simple and earnest, his eloquence plain, ready, and forcible, of a kind eminently suited to his time and his function, and wholly new in the House of Commons. It was at once remarked, that he was not treated in the House with the courtesy usually accorded to a new member; and it was perceived that he did not need such observance. However agreeable it might have been to him, he did not expect it from an assemblage proud of “the preponderance of the landed interest” within it; and he could do without it. Some who had least knowledge of the operative classes, and the least sympathy for them, were touched by the simplicity and manliness with which the new member received the jeers which followed his detailed statements of the proportion of the bread-duty paid by men who must support their families on 10s. a week. “He did not know,” he said, “whether it was the monstrous injustice of the case, or the humble individual who stated it, that excited this manifestation of feeling; but still he did state that the nobleman’s family paid to this bread-tax but one half-penny in every 100l. as income-tax, while the effect of the tax upon the laboring man’s family was 20 per cent.¹ . . . He had lately had an opportunity of seeing a report of the state of our laboring population in all parts of the country. Probably honorable gentlemen were aware that a very important meeting had been lately held at Manchester: he alluded to the meeting of ministers of religion. [A laugh.] He understood that laugh; but he should not pause in his statement of facts, but might perhaps notice it before concluding. He had seen a body of ministers of religion of all denominations—650 (and not thirty) in number—assembled from all parts of the country, at an expense of from three to four thousand pounds, paid by their congregations. At that meeting, most important statements of facts were made relating to the condition of the laboring-classes. He would not trouble the House by reading those statements; but they showed, that, in every district of the country, . . . the condition of the great body of Her Majesty’s laboring population had deteriorated wofully within the last ten

¹ Hansard, lix. pp. 236, 240.

years, and more especially within the last three years ; and that, in proportion as the price of food increased, in the same proportion the comforts of the working-classes had diminished. One word with respect to the manner in which his allusion to this meeting was received. He did not come there to vindicate the conduct of these Christian men in having assembled in order to take this subject into consideration. The parties who had to judge them were their own congregations. There were at that meeting members of the Established Church, of the Church of Rome, Independents, Baptists, members of the Church of Scotland and of the Secession Church, Methodists, and indeed ministers of every other denomination ; and, if he were disposed to impugn the character of those divines, he felt he should be casting a stigma and a reproach upon the great body of professing Christians in this country. He happened to be the only member of the House present at that meeting ; and he might be allowed to state, that, when he heard the tales of misery there described ; when he heard these ministers declare that members of their congregations were kept away from places of worship during the morning service, and only crept out under cover of the darkness of night ; when they described others as unfit to receive spiritual consolation, because they were sunk so low in physical destitution, — that the attendance at Sunday-schools was falling off ; when he heard these and such-like statements ; when he who believed that the corn-laws, the provision monopoly, was at the bottom of all that was endured, heard those statements, and from such authority, — he must say that he rejoiced to see gentlemen of such character come forward, and like Nathan, when he addressed the owner of flocks and herds who had plundered the poor man of his only lamb, say unto the doer of injustice, whoever he might be, ‘Thou art the man.’ The people, through their ministers, had protested against the corn-laws. Those laws had been tested by the immutable morality of Scripture. Those reverend gentlemen had prepared and signed a petition, in which they prayed the removal of those laws, — laws which, they stated, violated the Scriptures, and prevented famishing children from having a portion of those fatherly bounties which were intended for all people ; and he would remind honorable gentlemen, that, besides these 650 ministers, there were 1500 others from whom letters had been received, offering up their prayers, in their several localities, to incline the will of Him who ruled princes and potentates to turn your hearts to justice and mercy. When they found so many ministers of religion, without any sectarian differences, joining heart and hand in a great cause, there could be no doubt of their earnestness. . . . Englishmen had a respect for rank, for wealth, perhaps too much ; they felt an attachment to the laws

of their country: but there was another attribute in the minds of Englishmen,—there was a permanent veneration for sacred things; and where their sympathy and respect and deference were enlisted in what they believed to be a sacred cause, ‘you and yours,’ declared the speaker, addressing the Protectionists, ‘will vanish like chaff before the whirlwind.’” Much of this speech relating to the great meeting of religious ministers at Manchester, and its tone being determined accordingly, some of the laughing members of the House called Mr. Cobden a Methodist parson, and were astonished afterwards to find what his abilities were in widely different directions. Some regarded him as a pledged Radical in politics, and were surprised to see him afterwards verifying the assurances he gave this night,—that he belonged to no party, and, as a simple free-trader, would support either the Whigs or Sir R. Peel, whichever of them should go furthest in repealing the restrictions on food. Almost everybody regarded him as a representative of the Manchester manufacturers, as an embodiment of cotton-spinning, and therefore as the sworn foe of the landed interest: but it appeared in due course that he was the son of a Sussex farmer; that he understood and had at heart the interests of agriculture; and that he could enlighten and guide and aid the farming class and their laborers far better than those who assumed to be their special friends and protectors. In proportion as Mr. Cobden’s influence rose and spread in the League and in the country, the agitation against the corn-laws included more and more of the landed interest, and was less and less distinctive of the manufacturing districts and population. Meantime, from this 25th of August, 1841, there were members of the landed aristocracy who watched Mr. Cobden’s course with an interest beyond that of curiosity; declaring that this, his first address to the House—an address which he supposed to be the simplest possible statement of a very simple matter—was “a great speech.”

By the spring of 1843, how changed was the tone of the House! There was no laughing now at or about the Lancashire Leaguers; but, instead, a rueful complaint from Mr. Bankes, as spokesman for “the landed interest,” of their activity and power in the country. “As to matters affecting those who, like himself,” said Mr. Bankes, “desired to live quietly and safely among their tenantry in the country, the Ministry had not the power of knowing, as he and other gentlemen in the country had, the enormous extent of mischief which might be produced—which was attempted to be produced—at this present time, by the emissaries of this League.¹ . . . He had no reason to seek for any ministerial support in the county

¹ Hansard, lxvii. p. 912.

which he represented; but he looked to ministers for the peace of his private life,—for the comfort, happiness, and welfare of the peasantry who lived around him. He looked to them to drive away, by some means or other, this new mode of sending emissaries throughout the country,—paid emissaries: for such were avowed and boasted of by the honorable member for Stockport [Mr. Cobden]. It was of this he complained, and it was from this he entreated the government to protect the country; as one of their fellow-citizens, as a faithful and dutiful subject of the Crown, he asked, he besought, he demanded this at the hands of Her Majesty's ministers."

It need not be said that Mr. Bankes's demand was in vain. Ours is not a country, nor an age, in which government can stop inquiries into the rate of wages and the condition of the laborer, or interfere with the publication of the results. As is always the case when monopolies are about to be destroyed, the advocates of monopoly in this instance mistook the movement for an attack upon their fortunes, and an interference with their private affairs. The League leaders were always anxious to learn,—ready to receive suggestions and instructions from their foes; and from this it was that their agents were abroad at this time in the agricultural counties. At first, the movement was regarded as one of the manufacturers exclusively; and at first perhaps it was so. It was originated in Lancashire,—its head-quarters were at Manchester,—and its funds were mainly supplied by "the cotton lords" of the district. They were taunted with a sordid regard to their own interest, and charged with a desire to sacrifice the peasantry of the country to their own ends. Their daily improving knowledge of the operation of the corn-laws was rapidly teaching them much more than they had ever dreamed of, of the fatal influence of those laws on the condition of the agricultural laborer; and they now resolved to ascertain the facts of the state of the peasantry in the southern counties, and to publish them, week by week, in their newspaper. Though they, and all other political economists, knew, as the very alphabet of their science, that the employers of labor do not fix the wages of labor, they were aware that their opponents did not yet understand this; and they therefore lost no opportunity of saying everywhere, from the House of Commons down to the humblest open-air gathering, that it was the corn-laws and other irresistible influences, and not the land-owners, that made wages so low. Yet every gentleman on the Protectionist side, whose laborers were starving on 7s. or 8s. per week, resented the publication of the fact, as an imputation on his humanity. It was not this that was the ground of imputation; but the carelessness or prejudice or neglect of duty, which made these gentry extol the condition of their

wretched dependents, and resent all inquiry into it, and all efforts to improve it. There is material in that singular newspaper, the "League," which can be found nowhere else, for a history of the condition of the people prior to the release of agriculture from so-called protection. Agents of good business-habits, knowledge, and power of observation, were sent on journeys through counties, where they paused at every step, noted the condition of every field, fence, farm-yard, and cottage for miles together; and the evidence thus afforded of bad tillage, and every kind of waste, of overweening rents, uncertain profits, and wages reduced below the point of possible maintenance, is such as a future generation could not believe, if offered in a less unquestionable form. On one nobleman's estate, the poor laborers were punished by being turned to road-labor for having answered the questions of a League agent, and admitted him into their hovels, where he noted the holes in the thatch, and the puddles in the floor, and witnessed the destitution of food. The League, from that moment, changed its method of procuring the same kind of information, — publishing the fact, that in no case detailed by them was the information obtained from the sufferers themselves; and on they went with their disclosures. The further they proceeded, the more they confirmed the statements of the 2,000 ministers of religion who prayed in their churches and chapels for equal laws and daily bread for all.

But the League leaders not only sent agents through the agricultural districts; they went there themselves. As soon as the House rose, Mr. Cobden was down upon the southern and mid-land counties, holding meetings on market-days, and arguing the question against all comers with singular success. We find, in glancing over the newspapers of the time, that his opponents were usually elaborately prepared, — their loudest speakers put forward, — their resolutions or amendments well pondered, — their posse of supporters well placed on the ground; but too often, we find them, when baffled, and perceiving the audience going against them, losing temper, seizing the wagons, or drowning the voices of the speakers by clamor. Rapidly, there was an accession of farmers to the League; and some of them became League speakers. More rapidly than ever before, intelligence began to spread among the dull and depressed laboring-class. They found light cast upon their condition; they heard reasonings which they understood; they found that what they had suspected was really true, — that their interests were not identical with those of the receivers of rent, though it was true that they ought to be. They understood that they and their employers, the farmers, were the "agricultural interest" which the League desired to restore to prosperity, and not the land-owners; the land-owners being, as Mr. Cobden told them, no more agricultur-

ists than ship-owners were sailors. By means of exercising the minds of the laboring-classes on affairs interesting to them, and within their comprehension, the League leaders did more for popular education than has, as yet, been achieved by any other means. A circumstance less worthy of note is, that, as the weeks and months passed on, we see more and more of county magistrates, of land-owners, of noblemen, and members of Parliament attending on the hustings, and joining their efforts with those of the League leaders. And, next, we arrive at notices of meetings of agricultural associations, and other bodies, where members of the government are found speaking. Their theme is always the backward state of agriculture, and the necessity of advancing it, in order to enable the country to produce its own food, and be independent of the foreigner. The hearers regularly appear anxious to be told about tenures, — to know what their rulers thought about leases, — about the security the tenant might hope for, if he should be willing to lay out capital in the improvement of his land; and as regularly they appear to have been disappointed. Amidst a great deal that is very interesting about draining and fencing, and an improved farming economy in every way, nothing seems to have been ever said about rents and leases. Yet, it was unwise to leave these topics to be dealt with exclusively by the League. It was natural that men should watch the movements of the Prime Minister in relation to such matters at such a time; and a speech of his at the Tamworth Town-hall, at the meeting of a farmers' club, in October, 1843, was read and commented on all over the country.¹ It spoke of leases. After urging on the farmers to improve their knowledge and skill, and offering to procure them means of information, Sir R. Peel avowed his willingness to grant leases to any tenant of his own who should desire one, and could show that he was able and willing to improve the land. The speech conveyed everywhere a strong impression that it was spoken with the earnestness belonging to a critical season; that the speaker believed the improvement of agriculture to be the only ground of hope of better times for the landed interests. But there was a paragraph at the end, which fixed attention more than all the rest. The vicinity of Birmingham was pointed out as a capital advantage to the Leicestershire farmers, as affording a market for their produce; and nothing could be more clear than the assertion of the Prime Minister, that the interests of agriculture and manufactures are inseparably united, and that whatever supports the vigor of manufactures must open markets, and keep up the demand for agricultural produce. This doctrine is simple and clear enough: but it was then League doctrine, and absolutely opposite to that taken

¹ *Spectator*, 1843, p. 1012.

for granted by the Protectionists; and it excited a proportionate sensation when given forth by the head of the Administration.

A month after this, the League met in Manchester to offer evidence of much increased boldness and power. Last year, they had easily raised 50,000*l.*, to be employed in the diffusion of knowledge in relation to the corn-laws: they now resolved to raise 100,000*l.*; and six persons stepped forward instantly to offer 500*l.* each, and forty-two gave, on the spot, sums between that amount and 100*l.* Before the meeting closed, nearly 13,000*l.* were subscribed.¹ The money was needed for other purposes than the diffusion of information. For five years the League had petitioned the Sovereign and the Parliament; and now they thought it time to address themselves to those who made the Parliament. They turned to the electors, and pledged themselves to be present and active at every election, and to contest every borough, till a Parliament should be obtained which should repeal the corn-laws. They had good reason for confidence in this course; for they had just carried the city of London. Mr. Baring had been rejected for Mr. Pattison, the free-trade candidate; and an analysis of the votes had clearly shown, that it was the casting-vote of the League — between the Conservatives and the Whigs — which had decided the election. And herein lay another evidence of the readiness of the League to take advice from its enemies, and profit by their taunts. In Parliament, from the time the League was first mentioned there, till the thing could be said no longer, we find speaker after speaker saying that the League had no influence in London, and could make no impression there. The League admitted to itself that it had far too little influence in London; and it resolved to try whether it could make an impression in that stronghold of monopoly. The West-India interest was there; the Canada interest was there; and the shipping interest, and every thing that shrank from thorough-going free-trade. These made London very difficult to gain; but, till London was gained, the aim could not be accomplished.

Associations were formed there, and district meetings held; but the area was too large to be conquered by such a method of attack. Weekly meetings of the aggregate London societies were held at the Crown and Anchor: but presently the Crown and Anchor would not hold half that came; and the remarkable step was taken of engaging Drury Lane Theatre for the Wednesday evening meetings. The first was held there on the 15th of March, 1843.² The tickets were all gone on the Tuesday afternoon; and the theatre was crowded in every part. Probably London will never witness a stranger spectacle than that which might now,

¹ Spectator, 1843, p. 1083.

² Spectator, 1843, p. 246.

for above two years, be seen, — of one or other of the great theatres crowded from the floor to the roof by a multitude who came, week by week, to hear, for many hours together, nothing but political economy, all bearing on one point, — the repeal of an obnoxious law. The interest, the emotion, the passion aroused and demonstrated, equalled, and even transcended, all that had ever been manifested, when poetry, instead of dry science, occupied the scene. It is true, the speaking was most able and very various; and no deeper tragedies were ever presented there than some which were related as happening close at hand, and every day, through an artificial restriction of food; but still the audience went to hear political economy and statistics, and were so roused by appeals based on facts and figures, that the cheering was at times almost maddening. None could mock and deride who had ever been there; but many did — even the Prime Minister himself — while the thing was new, and regarded as a clap-trap, instead of what it really was, — the most effectual way of rapidly diffusing information, and exciting the spirit of enterprise needed for the proposed reform. The result appeared in the city election of the next November; and from that time we read of fewer jests, and of more appeals to government to “put down the League.” It is needless to say, that an association organized to obtain the repeal of an Act of Parliament, by means of a diffusion of information among electors especially, and everybody else afterwards, could not be “put down;” and, from the time that the city of London elected a League candidate, and such land-owners and agriculturists as Lord Fitzwilliam and Lord Spencer avowed themselves converts to League doctrines, — all of which happened before the end of 1843, — no minister could listen for a moment to the frantic entreaties of the Protectionists that their enemy might be crushed before their eyes. Like Mr. Bankes, they “asked,” they “besought,” they “demanded” this of ministers; but ministers could only be silent, and leave the great association to pursue its strictly legal course. And among the Leaguers might now be found a man whose name was enough to make the owners of property pause before they assailed the association of which he had become a member. Mr. Samuel Jones Loyd, the banker, who had more interest in the security of property, and more knowledge how to secure it, than almost any other man in the city of London, had, in October, sent a letter to the League council, in which he intimated that he felt it right to overcome his reluctance to join any public body for whose acts he could not be responsible.¹ “The time is now arrived,” he wrote, “when this must be overruled by other considerations of overwhelming importance. The great question of free-trade is now fairly at

¹ Spectator, 1843, p. 986.

issue; and the bold, manly, and effectual efforts which have been made by the League in its support command at once my admiration and my concurrence."

An incident is related in the chronicles of the year, which, as it strongly excited curiosity within the Cabinet, as well as elsewhere, may be hoped to have led to some consideration of the effect upon conscience of laws too bad to be observed. Under the head, "Remarkable Case of Conscience," we find that a man who had given in an honest return of the profits of his regular business, in paying his income-tax, had become conscience-stricken afterwards at having paid no tax on his income from smuggling; and that he therefore sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer 14,000*l.*, as due on three years' profits.¹ There is no appearance of his having any pain of conscience about smuggling, even to the enormous amount thus indicated, while so sensitive about paying a tax of which his mind approved. The most searching inquiries failed to discover who was the owner of a conscience in so instructive a condition; and the ministers were left with a lesson which some of them were beginning hardly to need. A more trifling anecdote evidences the feverishness of the time about the opinions of the Premier on trade in corn. A Manchester manufacturer sent to Sir R. Peel two pieces of velveteen of a new and beautiful fabric, the device on which was "a stalk and ear of wheat, grouped, or rather thrown together, very tastefully, with a small scroll peeping from beneath, bearing the word 'Free.'"² Sir R. Peel sent "a handsome letter" of thanks and acceptance. The "Times" related the transaction: the "Standard" did the same, omitting all about the wheat-ears and the scroll. The "Morning Post" was scandalized at both, and the Minister's acceptance of the gift. The quarrel attracted the Minister's eye afresh to the velveteen, when he saw the scroll, and immediately returned the present, with an explanation that he had been unaware that "any matters which were the subject of public controversy" were concerned in the transaction. The manufacturer, on his part, disclaimed any intention of embarrassing the Minister, and published the correspondence, to allay the jealousy which had been excited.

In 1844, the efforts of the League became more distasteful than ever to their opponents. They took the registration in hand, and were soon able to give a precise account of 140 boroughs. No one could reasonably object to this part of the enterprise, as it was a method open to every party. It was made known to the hearers at the League meetings, that there was no occasion ever to despair of the regeneration of any borough; and that it would be wrong to regard any

League registration.

¹ Annual Register, 1843, Chron. 53.

² Spectator, 1843, pp. 6, 30.

as in a fixed condition of opinion. The constituency was renewed at the rate of from 10 to 15 per cent annually, and was wholly changed in ten years. There was, therefore, every encouragement to strive to enlighten and inspire the constituencies. It was by this time certain, that a great accession of free-traders would be found in the House after the next election; and this, joined to the fact of the great changes within the House, shown by the decrease of the majorities against Mr. Villiers's annual motion, indicated that the final struggle could not be very far off. But prospects of infinitely greater importance were now opening,—prospects of such vastness that the Leaguers themselves did not, as they have since said, by any means perceive the extent of their new enterprise. Their study of the boroughs led them to the contemplation of the counties, where their foes' chief strength lay; and that contemplation led Mr. Cobden to the discovery of a remedy for the false representation, or the non-representation of the bulk of the nation, by which the polity of Great Britain will be affected, probably down to the remotest posterity.

The operation of the Reform Bill was injured, and well-nigh ruined, by the Chandos clause. By this clause, which ^{Freehold} favored the land-owners by admitting their tenants-at-land scheme. will on easy terms to the franchise, a great number of votes could be fabricated, by the putting together many partners in a tenancy-at-will. Brothers, sons, uncles, and every kind of relative, were made partners, and had votes under this clause; and thus, in the agricultural districts, the voters were one in twenty-two; and "the landed interest" gained the counties, while, in the manufacturing districts of Lancashire, the voters were only one in eighty of the inhabitants. In West Surrey, the voters were one to 26; and, in Middlesex, one to 115. In considering how to lessen this prodigious inequality, and give a fair share of the representation to South Lancashire and the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire, Mr. Cobden found that the requisite power lay in the Reform Bill itself,—in the forty-shilling freehold clause. Upon inquiry, it appeared that a house, the possession of which would confer the franchise, might be had for from 30*l.* to 40*l.*; and it was clear that a world of difficulty and expense might be saved by the League undertaking all the part of the business which the artisan can least manage for himself. If the League opened books for the registration of land and houses on sale, surveyed the property, prepared the conveyance deeds, and, in short, left to the purchaser nothing to do but to choose his property, pay for it, and take possession, there could be no doubt of the readiness of a host of artisans and operatives to invest their savings in this secure and honorable kind of property, rather than

in any other mode. The plan was immediately set on foot; and, before the year was out, the spectacle might be seen, so ardently desired by many philanthropists, of numbers of the working-class in possession of a plot of land and a house of their own; having, as Conservative politicians have been wont to say, "a stake in the country." It was well to provide for coming county elections; it was well to neutralize the vicious operation of the Chandos clause: but it was a far greater thing to have recurred to the benefit of making our working-classes citizens indeed by giving them the power of holding house or land by means of their own earnings; and to do this by a method suited to the time, and to the existing state of our civilization,—not by tempting them to depend on the land for subsistence, but only as an investment for their savings, after maintaining themselves by the species of labor which the time requires. A natural apprehension was widely expressed at first, that the land-owners would cut up their estates, as the Irish landlords had formerly done, and that the county constituencies would thus become depraved by the admission of mere creatures of the proprietors to the suffrage; but, as Mr. Villiers was at pains to explain, it was now too late for this to be done to any great extent. The land-owners had already done their utmost; and, in a very large proportion of cases, the land which was nominally their own was not really so. They had worked the Chandos clause of the Reform Bill to the utmost; and now they must leave to others the working of the forty-shilling freehold clause. The event, as far as it can be judged of at this day, seems to have proved that the Leaguers were right. They soon turned the scale in some of the counties; and the operation has been continued, with still increasing vigor, to this hour. The working-men of the midland counties, who had nothing to do with the League in its day, have learned from it to invest their savings in the best way, and obtain political privileges at the same time; and the prodigious extent of their associations for the purpose enables them to conduct the business, and acquire their freeholds, at a less cost than Mr. Cobden himself could have dreamed of when he propounded his plan. Freeholds are now obtained by thousands at the rate of 19*l.* each; and the working-men of the midland towns who can invest this sum from their earnings, to obtain political privileges, are a class of the constituency that every true statesman and lover of his country will welcome to the exercise of their rights.

In the course of their inquiries and action, the Leaguers discovered that the game-laws were of more importance, and more deadly injury, than even the best informed of them had been at all aware. They found that the law, which bears an appearance of impartiality,—the law that the game on

The game-laws.

any land is the property of the occupier, unless he chooses to part with it,—is utterly unavailing under the existing competition for farms. The competing farmers allowed the landlords to make any arrangement they pleased about the game, hoping that the hares and pheasants would, according to the promise of the landlord, not be allowed to increase to an injurious extent,—a trust which was almost invariably found to be misplaced. The distress from this cause which came to their knowledge; the discovery that throughout the agricultural counties the expenditure of the peasantry was certainly larger than their apparent receipts, indicating a prevalence of poaching; the spectacle of jails overcrowded with prisoners, of whom the largest proportion were there for game offences; and the actual sight of hundreds of acres of produce destroyed by game,—these things pointed out the game-laws as a subject of attack to the League; and Mr. Bright obtained, in 1845, a committee which sat in two sessions. The sporting interest is too strong in Parliament to permit the due results to follow from the evidence obtained; but the information was not lost. Its purport was terrible beyond all expectation. It told that the direct waste of food through the ravages of game was equal in amount to the income-tax. It told of distress caused to the farmers in all degrees, from an irritating diminution of profits down to causing utter ruin, as in the case of an honest farmer,—an example of a common case,—who was thus reduced, in spite of the most strenuous efforts, from being a capitalist, down, by mournful degrees, to the station of a laborer at 10s. a week. It told of oppression on the part of sporting magistrates, and of unlimited opportunity for such oppression. It told of fearful demoralization in town as well as country, from the transactions connected with the sale of game. It told of the rousing of social and political discontents in places where the starving poor saw how much human food was devoured by hares and birds, and who felt how irreconcilable were the interests of the peasantry and the magistracy in regard to game. There was no need that it should tell of murders; for the newspapers of the day made known that part of the horror of the case. In January, 1844, a gamekeeper of Lord Grantley's, the father of seven children, was found murdered by poachers.¹ In March, a man named Lowther had a double certificate fine upon him, and thought, in his difficulty, of taking some of Lord Normanby's pheasants, wherewith to pay his fine. Being met, he shot Lord Normanby's keeper; and, being tried, he was found guilty of murder. But these, and all lesser cases of injury, were unhappily of too common an order to produce much effect on the public mind. The event of the year, in

¹ Annual Register, 1844, Chron. 4. Ibid. p. 31.

regard to game catastrophes, was one which found its way to the hearts, and troubled the minds, even of some parliamentary sportsmen. The Earl of Stradbroke was well known as a strict game-preserver; and his conspicuous advocacy of all stringent game-law provisions in the House of Lords prevented any mistake about his views. We find him, in June of this year, urging amendments on the Bill for the preservation of game by night,¹ — provisions for making more stringent a law already intolerably oppressive; and, in August, the kingdom was shocked by the news that two of Lord Stradbroke's gamekeepers had committed suicide, on two successive days.² From the evidence on the inquest, it appeared that the poachers had done much mischief in the preserves, and that Easy, the first suicide, fell into despondency, on hearing that Lord Stradbroke was coming down for the 1st of September. On the eve of that day, he shot himself through the mouth. The superintendent keeper, Cucksey, was supposed to take alarm lest he should be discovered to have removed pheasants' eggs from Easy's portion of the preserves, to make a better appearance in his own; and he shot himself the next day. Some little difference of tone is to be observed among legislators after this occurrence; a somewhat less stern assertion that the game was theirs, and that they would do what they chose with their own; a somewhat less virulent denunciation of the peasantry for helping themselves to wild creatures which they can never be made to regard as property, and for yielding to a temptation too strong for flesh and blood. For some time past, it had been rumored that the Home Secretary was looking closely into the commitments for poaching offences, all over the country, to ascertain their legality; and some persons even ventured to anticipate a proposal from the government for the complete revision of the game-laws.³ In August, we find Lord Lilford saying in the Upper House, that much observation had been occasioned by the Home Secretary having required from the governor of Northampton jail a return of summary convictions under the Game Act in that county; and Lord Lilford inquired of Lord Wharnccliffe, whether it was intended to cast any imputation on the magistrates of the shire. The reply was, that every county had been visited with the same requisition, because it was known to government that great irregularities had occurred in the management of such cases. The evidence of the Under-secretary for the Home Department, before Mr. Bright's committee in the next spring, disclosed such abundant reason for this inquiry, that we do not wonder at hearing of no more resentment on behalf of magistrates. So many of the mere commitments

¹ Hansard, lxxv. p. 145.

² Spectator, 1844, p. 848.

³ Hansard, lxxvi. p. 1642.

were illegal, that the Home Secretary made a jail-delivery of game offenders, extensive enough to render it prudent for the magistrates and their champions to drop the subject. Whenever the administration of justice in rural districts becomes a subject for legislation, as municipal reform has been in our time, the evidence of Mr. S. March Phillips, Under-secretary for the Home Department, before Mr. Bright's game-law committee, will suffice to show what that administration was up to 1845.

In the same August which brought the subject of the game-laws so often before the public, the "Morning Herald" announced that ministers were fully aware of the pernicious operation of the game-laws, and were contemplating a complete revision and large modification of them. It declared that the Home Secretary had kept a vigilant eye on the rural magistracy, ever since his entrance upon office, and had investigated every case of alleged severity; and it intimated that another session would hardly pass without a change of system. The next session brought about no change; nor has any subsequent session, except that hares are now deprived of some of the protection of sacred game. But public opinion has effected something of what legislation should long ago have done. Several noblemen and gentlemen — and in the first rank of these, the Duke of Bedford — have thrown open their preserves; and many more have given permission to their tenants to destroy hares and rabbits to any amount they please. A strong feeling of disgust at battue-shooting is spreading through all ranks, till we may hope it must reach the highest; and, when battue-shooting comes to an end, the overthrow of the game-law tyranny is nigh. The genuine game-law system, derived from feudal times, and endeared to the aristocracy by feudal associations, was destroyed by the Act which legalized the sale of game. The sport, thus degenerated into preserving game for battue-shooting, cannot long hold its ground against the indignities which now beset it, the wrongs of a suffering peasantry, and the spirit of agricultural improvement. Already our sportsmen are finding their way to the wilds of Norway and other countries, in pursuit of a truer sport than any that can now be procured at home. The Scotch moors also will be open for a long time to come. With these sporting-fields elsewhere, and the example of such landlords as the Duke of Bedford at hand, we may hope that the gentry who uphold in Parliament a game-law which must make every statesman blush, will grow ashamed of insisting on their privilege and amusement, at the expense of ruin to the farmers, and corruption among the peasantry.¹

Between 1833 and 1844, there were 41 inquests on slain gamekeepers; and, in 26 of these cases, verdicts of wilful murder

¹ Polit. Dict. ii. p. 54.

were returned. In some of the rural counties, nearly half of the total commitments to jail were game cases; and the maintenance of the families of poachers, and the necessary enlargements of the jails, and employment of a numerous police, were heavy burdens to the occupiers of land,—already much injured by the partial destruction of their crops. The convictions in England and Wales for breach of the game-laws for the year 1843 alone were 4,529. It is computed that the expenditure occasioned by the game-laws, independent of the waste of food, amounts to more than that of the poor-law system. “Within the last fifty years,” says our calm and judicial-minded expositor of the “Political Dictionary,” “game has been preserved to an excess which was previously unknown. Most of the laws relating to game which have been passed within this period have been to enable game preservers to indulge in this taste, and to visit with greater severity those who are tempted by the abundance of game to become poachers. The accumulation of game in preserves, watched and guarded by numerous keepers, has led to changes in the mode of sporting. The sportsman of the old school was contented with a little spoil, but found enjoyment in healthful recreation and exercise, and was aided by the sagacity of his dogs. In the modern system of battue-shooting, the woods and plantations are beaten by men and boys; attendants load the sportsmen’s guns, and the game is driven within reach of gunshot, and many hundred heads of game are slaughtered in a few hours. The true sportsman would as soon think of spoiling a poultry-yard. . . . The effect of protecting game by oppressive laws is, perhaps, more injurious to the morals of the rural population than any other single cause. The gentry of England are distinguished by many good qualities; but the manner in which many of them uphold their amusements at the cost of filling the jails with their poor neighbors, who acquire those habits which lead to the ruin of themselves and their families, is a blot on their character which has yet to be wiped off.” We must leave it to a future historian to assign the date of its obliteration.

CHAPTER XI.

THE financial statement for 1843 was looked for with some dread by all parties. It could not be otherwise than ^{Financial} unfavorable. The long distress was not yet over; ^{statement.} the income-tax could have yielded nothing yet; and the prodigious reduction of import-duties consequent on the alteration of the tariff must have operated immediately, and presented its worst aspect first.

On the 8th of May, Mr. Goulburn made his statement. Under some heads, there had been disappointment.¹ Others indicated an improvement in manufactures and in the condition of the people. The deficiency was about 2,000,000*l.*; but the income-tax was certain to be more productive than had been supposed. The net revenue from it was likely to be about 5,100,000*l.* On the whole, a small deficiency was left; but it was so evident that the worst was over with the customs, and that the produce of that department must increase as the benefits of a free-trade were experienced, that the surplus of a future time might be confidently reckoned on to pay up the present small deficiency. Two heavy charges of unusual character—for opium compensation, and to re-imburse the East-India Company for the Chinese war—might be paid out of the Chinese money to come in hereafter; but, meantime, the sums must be advanced. No remission of taxation could be looked for under these circumstances; and the most vehement objectors to the income-tax had now nothing to say when asked what we should have done without it. The deficiency was owing chiefly to a falling-off in the wine, spirits, and malt duties, from causes which could not have been anticipated,—the expiration of the Methuen treaty with Portugal, the spread of the temperance movement, and the badness of the malting season. One free-trade deed was done by Parliament, this session, at the instance of ministers.² The law was repealed which prohibited the exportation of machinery. This law had long been practically inoperative, as there is no machinery which cannot be sent abroad in portions under cover; and the only effect of the law, of late years, had been to make British ma-

¹ Hansard, lxxviii. p. 1391.

² Hansard, lxxi. p. 547.

chinery dearer on the continent than it need be, so as to enable the Belgian manufacturers to undersell the English. The English would henceforth have a fairer chance.

The financial statement of 1844 showed that the Minister had been quite right in anticipating a revival of prosperity, and a surplus, larger or smaller. The surplus was large beyond every one's expectation, amounting to 2,700,000¹. It was clear that the distress was over for this time, and that all the great interests of the country were rapidly rising. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was pressed with proposals on every hand for the reduction of taxes; but he had to consider that the income-tax was, as yet, the only resource to fall back upon, and that its continuance beyond the next year had still to be debated. Bearing this in mind, he was disposed to apply the present surplus to the augmentation of the balance in the exchequer, only remitting duties on a few articles to the extent of 387,000^{l.} a year. Some amendments on Mr. Goulburn's proposals were moved, but not carried. The great conflict of parties was on the sugar-duties; and the struggle was, this year, a remarkable one, and no less beneficial than remarkable in one of its consequences, — proving the strictness of principle and clear insight of the League leaders.

Year by year, the free-trade party in the House of Commons protested against the preference shown to colonial above foreign sugars; and Mr. Cobden moved a resolution, in June, 1843, against the differential sugar-duty. The state of the revenue at that time furnished Mr. Goulburn with a sufficient plea for not then altering the duties; and he did not conceal that he was glad to avoid the risk of letting in slave-grown produce by a reduction of duty on foreign sugars. In the present year, however, the plea of a deficient revenue was taken away; and not only so, but the improved condition and habits of the people, who were becoming consumers of tea and coffee at a perpetually increasing rate, required, Mr. Goulburn said, that provision should be made for a larger supply of sugar.² Before negro emancipation, our West-India colonies produced about one-third more sugar than was wanted at home; but after that date, while the production had diminished, the demand had largely increased. Some of the need had been supplied by Parliament having brought East and West India sugars nearer, in regard to duty: but the price had risen 2s. per hundred-weight in the year that was gone; and the demand was certain still to increase. While the Legislature was about the work of altering the duties, it might as well provide some surplus of supply for a future rise of demand. Mr. Goulburn proposed to do this in a way which,

¹ Hansard, lxxiv. pp. 361–385.

² Hansard, lxxv. pp. 154–183.

as government believed, would reconcile an enlargement of the supply of sugar with fidelity to their antislavery principles. He brought forward two resolutions, by which, first, sugar certified to be the growth of China, Java, Manilla, or other countries where no slave-labor was employed, should be admitted at a duty of 34s., the colonial duty remaining as before at 24s. ; and, secondly, the Queen should be authorized, at the same date, to proceed upon any existing treaties by which she was bound to admit the sugars of any foreign country on the same footing as that of the most favored nation. This resolution related to Brazil, whose treaty with us would expire at that date.

By these propositions, the government separated itself from both the parties regularly opposed to each other on the sugar question,—the West-India interest and the free-traders ; and hard work it was for Mr. Goulburn to maintain any thing like a secure footing between them. The West-India interest pleaded, as usual, the peculiarity and hardship of their case as a reason against any enlargement of the area of supply. They considered themselves entitled to the benefit of any rise of price that might take place from the increased demand. The free-traders pointed out, that, as our consumption increased, slave-grown sugar would find its way somewhere, — if not to us, to the countries that supplied us ; and that our discontinuance of slave-grown sugar would thus be reduced to a mere sham. Lord John Russell's amendment in favor of admitting all foreign sugars at 34s. was rejected by a majority of 69 ; and Mr. Goulburn brought in his Bill, which was read twice without debate.¹ The 14th of June was the day when the House went into committee upon it. On that day, Mr. Miles moved as it had been decided by the West-India ^{Mr. Miles's motion.} body in the city that he should. There had been a meeting of that body in the morning, and they had agreed that Mr. Miles should propose a lowering of the duty on colonial and East-India sugar to 20s., instead of the 24s. proposed by government ; and the raising of the duty on “white clayed, or equivalent to white clayed” — partially refined — sugar of foreign free-labor production, to 34s. ; the duty on brown or clayed being 30s.² Mr. Goulburn objected that the leaving a differential duty of 10s. gave only precisely the same protection to colonial interest as he had proposed, while the loss of the 4s. on each sort would make a disastrous difference to the revenue. Not a few free-traders were caught by the temptation of an apparent reduction of 4s. on colonial sugars ; but the better men of business of that party saw that Mr. Miles's proposition, if carried, would in effect merely establish a differential duty of 14s. between colonial and other sugar, put the 4s. per hundred-weight into the pockets

¹ Hansard, lxxv. p. 219.

² Hansard, lxxv. p. 920.

of the West-India planters, and cause a serious diminution in the revenue. They would not countenance this, nor express any such acquiescence in any differential duty: they would rather wait till the next year, when the whole subject must come under revision and re-arrangement, and when their present resistance to the bait of the Protectionists would give them a title to deference. Other people, however, were less clear-sighted or less virtuous. It was evident that here was an opportunity for trying with advantage whether the government could not be upset. Lord John Russell with his Whig tail went out into the lobby, mixed up with Lord John Manners and his "Young England,"—a good many wondering free-traders swelling the numbers. These free-traders wondered to find themselves in such company, and yet, to think that they should have left Cobden and Ricardo, and Thornely and Warburton, behind. By means of this curious coalition and confusion, ministers were outvoted by a majority of 20.¹ Mr. Cobden and the League immediately lost much popularity. It was only for a short time, and with people who could not see why he should prefer a duty of 24s. to one of 20s., or why he should refuse his help towards overthrowing the Administration, to bring in Lord J. Russell, with his 8s. fixed corn-duty. But it soon came to be understood, first, that Mr. Cobden and the League were sincere in their constant disclaimer of party purposes and party temper; and, next, that the restoration of the Whigs to power could have brought us no nearer to free-trade. The Whigs could not have held power for many days at that time; the existing government had a majority of 90 on all party divisions; and there could be no question among political economists, of Peel and his comrades understanding free-trade better than the Whigs, as well as being more able to give it. When these things became clear, Mr. Cobden and the League stood higher than ever.

It was on a Friday night, or rather Saturday morning, that the important division took place, which gave a majority of 20 against ministers. On Sunday morning, a Cabinet council was held; and, at its close, Sir R. Peel went to Buckingham Palace, where he was detained to dinner. It was everywhere rumored, that the Queen, then near her confinement, was strongly opposed to his resigning. On Monday, there was another Cabinet council, while people out of doors were settling whether the Minister would go out, or would propose, as the Whigs had done under a much more significant discomfiture, the continuance of the existing sugar-duties for another year. All day, lists of new ministries were made out, to pass the time till evening; and every Conservative who left his card at Sir R. Peel's door was noted

¹ Hansard, lxxv. p. 968.

and reported. The House was very full, — many sick members having made an effort to come. It was evident that all parties had mustered their forces diligently. A dead silence prevailed when the Premier rose to speak. His speech could hardly be an effective one, or delivered in his best manner, on an occasion so mortifying, and a subject so perplexed, and implicating so much unsoundness. He neither offered to retire, nor proposed the continuance of the existing sugar-duties. He declared his intention of adhering to the ministerial measure, exposed the difficulty of arranging the processes of government in regard to the sugar-duties, from the fact that the existing treaty with Brazil would expire on the 10th of November next, after which that country must be admitted on the same footing as the most favored nation; while the expiration of the existing duties rendered it impossible to wait, and every one knew that the whole subject must undergo revision in the next session, before it could be determined whether or not to renew the income-tax.¹ The rival motion was not one of opposition of principle: it only proposed different amounts, and not a different proportion of duty; and there would therefore be no disgrace to the House, if, on surveying the peculiarities of the case, it should reconsider its vote. If Parliament had confidence enough in the existing Administration to countenance and support its general principle of relaxing duties in ways which appeared safe and gradual, it might be expected not to thwart the government in regard to details of particular measures; and, on this ground, he asked for a reconsideration of the late embarrassing vote. This was granted him. In a committee of 488, Mr. Miles's proposition was rejected by a majority of 22. Two lasting consequences of this speech and division were, that the extreme Protectionists from that day drew off from Sir R. Peel, and hoped nothing more from him; and that his followers saw that there must be no faltering among them.² The Minister had a policy in view, clear and well defined; and he must carry it through, without being subject to misadventures through any instability of theirs. Now had been the moment for deciding whether he should be authorized to carry out his policy. It had been decided that he was; and now they were to support him without flinching or vacillation. The next year must be a great one, in regard to affairs of commerce and finance; and this was the preparation for it. The ministerial Bill, after some further discussion in both Houses, stopping short of the point of endangering it, became law on the 4th of July.³

As the prosperity of the kingdom advanced, and capital

¹ Hansard, lxxv. pp. 987-1012.

² Hansard, lxxv. p. 1082.

³ Hansard, lxxvi. p. 294.

abounded, and the price of stocks rose, the holders of the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent consols became aware that they might soon expect to hear of a government plan for the reduction in that stock. Everybody said that such a reduction was a fair and proper means of diminishing the burdens of the country, — the interest of capital being now very low, and likely to remain so. The anxiety was as to how it would be done. Mr. Goulburn brought forward his plan on the 8th of March, 1844. The occasion was an important one; for the sum to be dealt with was larger than had ever before been taken in hand for regulation by the government, being little less than 250,000,000*l.* of money. The plan of the Chancellor was received with the utmost good-will and satisfaction; and no difficulty subsequently occurred. He proposed to deal with all the stock now comprehended under the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, except that constituted in 1818, which enjoyed some peculiar protections originally guaranteed to it.¹ With regard to all but this, he proposed that the $3\frac{1}{2}$ should be exchanged for $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent for ten years, and be reduced to 3 per cent in 1854; being guaranteed against any further reduction for twenty years from that date. By this plan, the immediate saving would be 625,000*l.* per annum for ten years; and, after that, 1,250,000*l.* per annum. The time allowed for dissent on the part of the holders was a fortnight for persons in England, three months for persons on the continent, and eleven months for everybody further off. The speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was cheered at intervals as it proceeded, and vehemently at the end; and a variety of speakers offered him compliments and congratulations afterwards. The resolutions proposed were passed unanimously, and the Bill founded on them left the Lords on the 19th of the same month. The dissentients were extremely few, and the affair went off with unexampled smoothness. Mr. Goulburn took advantage of the occasion to remedy the inequality of payments in the different quarters of the year. All the interest due on the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents would be paid up to the 10th of October; so that a new start would be made from that day, and a nearly equal issue would be made in the summer and winter, as in the spring and autumn quarters, — to the easing of currency and commerce. The reason of the fervor with which the plan was hailed was, that Mr. Goulburn had resisted the temptation of adding to the debt while obtaining present relief. He might have made a grander-looking measure by increasing the burdens of posterity: but the scheme he proposed would benefit a future, even more than the present generation; and generous acknowledgments of this merit were made on every hand.

¹ Hansard, lxxiii. pp. 729-748.

It will be remembered, that, when a new charter was granted to the Bank of England in 1833, it was provided, that, ^{Bank act of 1844.} though it was a charter for twenty-one years, it might be modified at the end of ten years, on six months' notice being given by Parliament. The ten years were now—in 1844—about to expire; and it was the Minister's desire that the charter should be modified. It was the desire of the country at large that changes should be made; for the last few years had wrought deeply on the public mind in regard to currency matters. The fever of joint-stock bank speculation had subsided. Opinions of Mr. S. Jones Loyd and Mr. Norman,—opinions clearly propounded before a parliamentary committee in 1840,—in favor of a single source of issue of money, had become widely known and intelligently embraced by a large majority of thinking persons; while, on the other hand, an extensive agitation had gone forward in favor of such an “expansion of the currency,” in all times of pressure, as might buy off the pressure, and spread ease through the field of commerce. The intricate and abstract subject of currency had become so interesting to the many, that pamphlets advocating every view appeared in abundance; and not a few, both of the wise and the foolish, went through several editions. It is easy to understand how some of the most unwise became the most popular. When the small traders and artisans of the great towns were told that trade was always good when paper money abounded, that a new issue of paper money had relieved commercial distress as often as it had been tried, and that hardship and misery always attended a contraction of the currency, it was not surprising that they should read with avidity publications which described the bliss of an abundance of money, and partly consoled them for past misfortunes by appearing to point out the cause of them. Publications more intelligent and more intelligible were read as eagerly as any novel, by men of business who were aware that the wisest of us have only too little knowledge and insight on a subject of central interest and importance,—a subject on which every man of business would gladly have a clear opinion if he could. On the whole, though the confusion of views was great, and the stragglers were so many as almost to defy classification, it may be said that there were three parties awaiting the exposition of the Minister's views on currency and banking in 1844: the advocates of an inconvertible currency,—of a paper circulation open to all comers whenever desired; the advocates of a legal declaration that paper money was convertible, without other safeguard than legal penalties in case of mischievous transgressions; and the advocates of a real security for such convertibility,—security in the form of precious metal actually laid by under the same roof from which its representative bank-

note goes forth. This last party were pretty generally aware beforehand, that Sir R. Peel was about to declare in their favor, and that his measure would appear to be nearly what would have been recommended by Mr. Loyd and Mr. Norman. The country bankers were so alarmed lest their privileges should be interfered with, that they held meetings and issued warnings, and strove to interest members of Parliament in their case, that any proposal of restricting issues to a single body might be resisted at once. But their apprehensions on this point were premature. The Minister believed that he could secure his end without going so far at present. All existing issues were to be allowed to go on; but no additions or successors were to be permitted. When this was once understood, the Minister was able to obtain a more patient hearing for his scheme. It was on the 6th of May that he made his exposition, in a lucid and interesting speech of three hours long. It was received, not only with the deference commanded by the supremacy of the speaker on financial subjects, but with much complacency, on account of the simplicity of the plan which was to effect changes of deep import without any of that monetary disturbance which had been dreaded as unavoidable. Men would have submitted to much in the hope of securing a sound system; but to have an apparently sound system offered to them, unaccompanied by temporary mischief, was beyond their hopes; and they were gracious accordingly. Their apprehensions never, however, had gone so far as to affect the price of stocks,—the funds standing precisely the same the day before and the day after the delivery of Sir R. Peel's speech.¹

The view which can be taken here is briefly this:—

If our commercial transactions were all confined within our own island, we should want no other basis for our paper circulation than national securities, such as stock and exchequer bills. The amount in circulation on these securities was supposed to be, as Sir R. Peel declared, about 22,000,000*l*. The issue of these 22,000,000*l*. was proposed to be divided between the Bank of England and the country banks, in the proportion of 14,000,000*l*. by the Bank of England, and 8,000,000*l*. by the country banks; such issue being upon other security than gold, as it was most improbable that gold would ever be demanded for notes so issued. But the circulation of the country is not 22,000,000*l*., but 30,000,000*l*.; and this last item of 8,000,000*l*. is the difficulty to be dealt with. It is the portion of our currency which is or may be concerned in our foreign commerce,—in a department where our national securities are of no use; and a security must be provided which is

Substance of
the Bill.

¹ Spectator, 1844, p. 445.

of universal value,—that is, gold. The gold wanted for the conduct of affairs in connection with foreign trade was assumed to be, at the utmost, 8,000,000*l.*; for before any thing like that quantity could have been drained out of the country, prices would have fallen so low as to induce a large exportation of goods, and the return of the gold. It was now provided that gold should always be in store to the amount of all paper issues beyond the 22,000,000*l.* based on national securities; and there could be no fluctuation in the amount of paper money, otherwise than in proportion to the gold offered to the Bank of England. The bank was bound to buy with its notes all the bullion that was brought, at a trifle below mint-price. Thus, the gold brought in would surely be replaced by an equal amount of paper. When gold was, on the other hand, drawn out, the paper that came in was to be cancelled,—a new safeguard, and a most necessary one, as the bank had, up to this time, often re-issued immediately the notes brought in, thus providing for a further drain of its gold at the very moment that it was draining out of itself. In case of joint-stock or other country banks closing from any cause, it was provided that government might authorize the Bank of England to issue, on securities, notes to the same amount as the closed bank had out; the expense and possible profit of the transaction being set down to the public.

The hope from this scheme was, that a perfect correspondence between paper issues and securities would be established.¹ But there is an element involved in the case, Probable effects. which introduces some confusion,—the deposits in the hands of bankers. In quiescent times, the correspondence may be practically complete. But in times of speculation, when the stage of transactions by cheques and book-credits is past, when manufacturers have to extend their operations, and to obtain accommodation from bankers, notes get out through the wages of workmen, and raise prices. Prior to 1844, the employers, in their desire to hold on, obtained more and more aid from bankers; all the deposits coming forth, and raising prices, till nothing was left but sudden contraction, and the perils and miseries that attend it. Some check, it is true, had been imposed by the prohibition of notes under the value of 5*l.*; but this went but a short way, and the present measure was proposed mainly for the sake of obviating the protraction of the struggle after an access of speculation, and stopping the drain of gold in good time. It is believed to have answered this purpose to a great extent; but here the baffling influence of such an incalculable element as the deposits is perceived. They can still protract the struggle which the operation of the Act of 1844 would otherwise bring to an end. As

¹ Mill's *Prin. of Polit. Econ.* ii. pp. 199–202.

they do not yield loanable capital at such a time, the rise of interest may still act as if they had not come forth,—may still act as a timely check by inducing foreigners to leave their gold with us, or to send in more; but the issue of the deposits does intercept the other timely check of a fall of prices, such as would induce exportation and bring back gold. This is a case which the Act of 1844 does not meet; and its action is somewhat interfered with by it. Still, the gain, through that Act, in shortening the struggle at the turning-point from speculation to collapse, is indisputably great; and the Minister, in his expository speech, claimed sympathy from thinking men in his hope and expectation that it would be so.

The resolutions on which the Bill was founded were brought Passage of the Bill. in on the 20th of May, and agreed to after some debate; and thus Parliament first declared in favor of the great change of separating the business of the Bank of England into two distinct departments,—the one for the issue of notes, the other for the transaction of the ordinary banking function; a near approach to the adoption of a single bank of issue.¹ There was at no stage opposition enough to endanger the Bill. By the great majority of members of all parties it was earnestly supported; and, when some few objected that it would not obviate commercial crises, they were met by the question, whether any legislation could neutralize an evil which would occasionally arise while men continue greedy after gain. If its tendency was to check and alleviate such crises, that was all that could be expected from any legislative provision. The Bill became law on the 19th of July.²

Some economists doubted at the time, whether the unquestionable advantages obtained by this Bill might not prove Supposed actual effects. to be too dearly purchased; and, since the stringent test to which the law was subjected in 1847, there have been more who have published an opinion that they are so. Men of such high authority as Mill, Tooke, and Fullarton, have said so, while expressing themselves with the moderation—not to say hesitation—which the imperfection of our knowledge and experience on this difficult subject demands. Mr. Mill points out, that extension of credit by bankers is a great benefit in a season of collapse,—and the aid formerly yielded by the bank, at whatever cost afforded, was salvation itself in such a crisis as that of 1825–6; that the notes thus issued in aid do not circulate, but go where they are wanted, or lie by or come back again immediately as deposits; that the new law does not allow expansion till gold comes for it, when the worst of the crisis is over; and that, as banks must be the source of aid in crises, such

¹ Hansard, lxxiv. p. 1346.

² Hansard, lxxxi. p. 1061.

an Act as that of 1844 must, in such a season, be either repealed or suspended.¹ The experience of 1847 suggests to Mr. Mill a yet worse objection. There are many causes of high prices besides that of undue expansion of credit.² Prices may rise by war expenditure, or expenditure for critical political objects; by foreign investments in mines or in loans; by the failure of cotton crops or other raw material from abroad; and by an extraordinary importation of food from bad harvests at home. In these cases, the gold would not be drawn from the circulation, but from hoards and bank reserves; and, in this case, the bank reserve is in effect a hoard. But the arrangement of the Act for the securing of convertibility is aimed at a state of high prices from undue expansion of credit, and from no other cause. The result is, that the paper-currency is contracted on occasion of every drain, from any cause whatever, and not merely when the gold is withdrawn from the circulation; and thus a crisis is, and must be, occasioned by every derangement of the exchange, or, at least, whenever there is pressure in the money-market. Before the crisis of 1847, there had been no speculation which could account for so terrible a collapse as took place in that year. The railway speculation of the time raised the rate of interest, but could not affect the exchange. The drain of gold was caused by the failure of the potato-crop at home, and the partial failure of the cotton-crop abroad,—circumstances of great financial inconvenience, but not adequate to occasion such a collapse of commercial credit as ensued. The Act of 1844 could not operate beneficially here; but, on the contrary, it wrought injuriously, by compelling all who wanted gold for exportation to draw it from the deposits, at the very time that interest was highest, and the loanable capital of the country most deficient. If the bank might then, before there was any collapse of credit, have lent its notes, there would have been no crisis,—only a season of pressure. As it was, it was necessary to suspend the Act of 1844; and Mr. Mill, in conducting his review of the measure and its operation, of its advantages and disadvantages, avows, that, in his opinion, “the disadvantages greatly preponderate.” Much as thinking men may have learned on the subject of currency within a few years, it is evident that more knowledge and experience are needed yet to bring us into a state of security.

Allusion has been made to an excess of railway speculation. Ten years before our present date, there was one railway in England,—the Liverpool and Manchester; Railway extension. and in Scotland an awkward one of seven miles long. In these ten years, the system had extended to a magnitude which made

¹ Principles of Polit. Econ. ii. pp. 203–205.

² Principles of Polit. Econ. ii. pp. 206–216.

it one of the chief boasts, and perhaps the most perplexing difficulty, of the time. Land-owners were groaning over the spoliation of their estates, for which no pecuniary award could be any compensation. Their park walls were cut through, — their “dingles and bosky dells” were cut through, — and their choicest turf, and their secluded flower-gardens. A serious conflict took place in November, in Lord Harborough’s park in Leicestershire, between his lordship’s tenantry and the railway surveyors, with the force they assembled. Railways were to run, not, only along the southern margin of the island, and round the bases of the misty Scottish mountains, but through the vale in which Furness Abbey had hitherto stood shrouded; and among old cathedrals of which the traveller might soon see half a dozen in a day. It was on Easter-Monday, 1844, that excursion-trips with return-tickets are first heard of.¹ Here began the benefits of cheap pleasure-journeys to the hard workers of the nation. The fares were much lowered; yet the extra receipts on the Dover line for three days were 700*l.*, and on the Brighton line, 1,943*l.* The process had begun from which incalculable blessings were to accrue to the mind, morals, and manners of the nation. From this time, the exclusive class was to meet the humbler classes face to face. The peer and the manufacturer and the farmer were henceforth to meet and talk in the railway carriage, and have a chance of understanding each other. The proud were to part with some of their prejudice, and the ignorant with some of their ignorance; and other walls of partition than park enclosures were to be broken down. The operative was to see new sights, hitherto quite out of his reach, — the ocean, the mountain and lake, and old ruins and new inventions; and the London artisan was to live, by and by, within sight of trees and green fields, and yet go to his work every day. As unwholesome old streets in London were pulled down, hamlets would rise up in the country, where he could live out of working hours, his railway fare to and from business being included in the rent of his cottage. The diet of millions was to be improved, — fish and foreign fruits being conveyed into the country; and milk, butter, and vegetables, fresh from the country, to be carried into the towns. Everybody’s wants and wishes would become known by the general communication about to be established; and the supply would reach the want and the wish. The change was vast, and the prospect magnificent; but this change, like every other, had to pass at its outset through a wilderness of difficulty.

A rage for railway-making took possession of minds prone to speculative folly. Jealousy and competitive zeal sprang up; and lines were planned whose chief purpose seemed to be to injure

¹ Spectator, 1844, p. 397.

each other. Rashness and knavery were all abroad; and the foolish and the ignorant were on the highway to ruin, as the prey of the rapacious, or in company with them. There was every probability that capital would be withdrawn to a fatal extent from the manufactures of the country, to be invested in railways which could only bury it at first, however productively it might re-appear. Moreover, a prodigious power was now put into the hands of men and companies as yet irresponsible for their use of it. The public had no longer any option how to travel. In a little while, they must go nowhere, or be carried by rail, — however such a mode of travelling might disagree with their health or their inclination. This in itself was not an obstructive objection to a system fraught with general advantage; but as yet no provision was made against the abuse of the necessity which had arisen. Not only was everybody compelled to travel by rail, but the mode and the cost were at the pleasure of the railway proprietors, who might charge what fares they dared, and provide as they thought proper for the accommodation of passengers: no competition could be brought to bear upon the proprietors; and their treatment of the public was regulated by the accident of their own feelings, the tempers of their agents, or their immediate view of their own interests. The question arose, what was to be done. There was much argument as to whether railways were or were not a monopoly; but there was a pretty wide agreement, that the great new power which had arisen in the midst of us was too formidable to be left without legislative control. Select
committee. Early in the session of 1844, a select committee of the Commons sat to consider the best means of adapting the growing railway system to the exigencies of the country.

The committee recommended a reduction of the deposit required by Parliament to be made before introducing a railway. From one-tenth it was to be one-twentieth. Competing lines were the great difficulty. As the most prominent districts of the country had been first appropriated, almost every new line must be more or less a competing line. It was recommended that a committee should be appointed to settle which were competing lines, and which were not; and then any competing lines were to be referred to one committee, whose members must sign a declaration, that neither they nor their constituents had any interest which could bias their minds in favor of either line.¹ A Bill was founded on the reports of the railway committee, Their Bill. which was passed before the end of the session, after an amount of debate which was natural under the novelty of the circumstances. There was much to be said in censure of the interference of Parliament with commercial enterprises, with

¹ Hansard, lxxiii. p. 516.

the regulation of fares, and with the construction of carriages. Men who held it a duty to interfere with manufacturers with regard to the construction of their mills, and the working of their machinery, and the hours of factory-labor, objected to interference with the great railway power, which held in its hand the locomotion of the nation; while, again, some who protested against factory legislation called for legislative support of the claim of the public, and especially the poorer classes, to safe and comfortable, as well as cheap, travelling.¹

The Act empowered the Lords of the Treasury to reduce fares, after a lapse of years, if the profits of any railway were found permanently to exceed 10 per cent, with a guarantee for the continuance, for a term, of that rate of profit. It provided for the purchase by government, under certain circumstances, of any future railway, under an Act of Parliament to be obtained for the purpose. It provided for the frequent running of third-class carriages; for their being provided with seats, and covered from the weather; for their speed and convenient stoppages, and the amount of luggage and of charge,—the charge being 1*d.* per mile, and the train being exempt from taxation. It provided for the conveyance of the mails, and of military and police forces, at certain charges, and for the establishment of electric telegraphs under proper conditions. Such, with numerous regulations of detail, were the provisions of the Railway Act of 1844. By an arrangement made in pursuance of a recommendation of the committee, the Board of Trade was charged with the new and onerous duty of overlooking the railway system, both as to law and practice. Its business would be to examine and keep watch over all preparations for new railways, and all fresh schemes; to watch over the safety and the interests of the public, and to select from among rival plans. When it appeared that the amount of railway bills was likely to obstruct, if not to drive out, all other business from the House of Commons, and that 800 miles of railway were sanctioned in this session, besides all the proposals that fell through, from one cause or another, people began to ask how the Board of Trade for railways could possibly manage its responsibilities. When it came out, that the estimated cost—usually less than half of the actual cost—was 1400*l.* per mile for the 800 miles just sanctioned by Parliament, the graver question arose, how the manufactures and commerce of the country were to sustain this vast abstraction of capital.² While sanguine speculators were saying that the doings of this year were a trifle compared with what would be done next, the threatened absorption of capital caused serious alarm to the more enlightened, who better understood what proportion the importance of

¹ Comp. to Almanac, 1844, p. 156.

² Comp. to Almanac, 1844, p. 104.

railroads bore to that of maintaining the manufactures of the country. Such persons foresaw that the new Bank Act would not wait long to be put to a stringent test.

The doings of the year *were* a trifle compared with those of the next. There was a want of harmony between the railway officers of the Board of Trade and the committee of the House of Commons. Railways recommended by the one were rejected by the other; and many which were condemned at the Board of Trade were successfully pushed in the House. The railway department of the Board of Trade was therefore completely remodelled in July, 1845. No reports on the merits of projected lines were henceforward to be offered; but it was requested of Parliament, that the Board might be furnished with the fullest information about all railway schemes, including sketches, plans, and sections of the lines, in order to a due supervision of the system and its details.¹ As for the House of Commons, it was obliged to set aside the standing orders about its railway committees, and to take the projects in groups, which were arranged by a new classification committee. The committees sat almost constantly, — even during adjournments of the House; yet they failed to get through nearly all the business offered them. Some schemes could not obtain a hearing at all; others, which had been considered safe, were left over to the next session, under a special provision that such business should be taken up where it was now left. Other delays were occasioned by the requisition of the Board of Trade of more plans and statements. While such was the condition of things in connection with the House, the excitement elsewhere was prodigious. Newspapers for railway topics were springing up in considerable numbers; and the “Railway Times,” for September 27, had nearly eighty quarto pages filled with advertisements. The journals of the time tell that 332 new schemes were proposed before the month of October in this year, involving a capital of 270,950,000*l.* and for which upwards of 23,000,000*l.* would have to be deposited before an Act could be applied for. A multitude of other schemes were in an incipient state; and there were sixty-six foreign railway projects in the English market. It was believed that altogether the number of plans which would be brought to the door of the Board of Trade by the expiration of the closing-day would be 815. The number which succeeded in obtaining admission was above 600.² The closing-day was the 30th of November.

As the summer closed and the autumn wore on, the most desperate efforts were made to get ready these plans. One lithographic printer brought over four hundred lithographers from Belgium, and yet could not get his engagements

Delivery of plans.

¹ Comp. to Almanac, 1846, p. 69.

² Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 177.

fulfilled. The draughtsmen and printers in the lithographic establishments lived there, snatching two or three hours' sleep on the floor, or on benches, and then going dizzily to work again. Much work was executed imperfectly; and much was thrown over altogether. Horses were hired at great cost, and kept under lock and key, to bring to town at the last moment plans prepared in the country. Express trains were engaged for the same purpose; and there were cases in which railway directors refused such accommodation to rival projectors, obliging the clerks in charge of the plans to hasten round some other way, with every risk of being too late. At the Board of Trade, every preparation was made for the pressure of the closing day.¹ The day was Sunday, — a circumstance which had been overlooked when the date was fixed. A large establishment of clerks was in readiness; and the work went on with some quietness till eleven at night. It had been settled that all applicants who were actually in the hall before the clock struck twelve should be considered to be in time; and, during the last hour, the crowd became inconvenient, and the registering could by no diligence keep pace with the applications. The calling of the agents' names, as a summons to the inner office, was listened to with nervous agitation by the expectants in the lobby; and there was a large crowd outside which amused itself freely with the bustle of the arrivals, and the masses of papers that were carried in. Twelve o'clock began to strike, and the doors were closing, when an agent pushed his way in. As the clock had not done striking when he arrived, he was, after some parley, admitted. No more came for a few minutes; but, before the quarter had struck, a post-chaise, with four reeking horses, dashed up, — three gentlemen rushed out, each loaded with a mass of papers, and found the door at the end of the passage closed. The crowd shouted to them to ring the bell; and one of them did so. A police inspector opened the door; and, as soon as it appeared that he was not going to admit them, the agents threw their papers into the hall, breaking the lamp that was burning there. The papers were thrown out again; and once more in and out, when the door was opened. One of the agents told his story to the crowd, who laughed heartily at it. The post-boy did not know London streets, and could not find the Board of Trade. He had been driving the agents about the streets of Pimlico ever since half-past ten. This was a comic ending, in the eyes of the thoughtless, of the competitive railway struggle of 1845; but all thoughtful persons felt very gravely about it. If this mass of railways could be constructed, the operation would be fearful upon the manufacturing interests of the country; and, if not, what loss must befall a host

¹ Spectator, 1845, p. 1155.

of ignorant and unwary speculators! It would be the scene of 1825-6 over again. If the promoters of these projects believed that they could succeed, it was a serious thing to have among us so many men of education so ignorant of political economy, and so senseless about social affairs. If they did not so believe, but hoped to profit by the ruin of their neighbors, it was a serious thing to have among us so many men of education, of a morality so loose and low. It was a painful exhibition, whichever way it was looked at.

The Great Western Railway had been constructed on a broader gauge than others, and the disputes about the comparative merits of the broad and narrow gauge ran high. There could be no dispute, however, about the mischief of the co-existence of the two. Goods sent from Birmingham and other places were stopped on reaching the Great Western at Gloucester, and had to be shifted into another train. The delay and injury thus caused were great; and there was a loud demand that the Great Western—which had at work only 274 miles of length, while there were 1901 miles of the narrow gauge—should conform to the gauge of other railways. In June, 1845, Mr. Cobden moved for an address to the Sovereign, praying for the appointment of a royal commission to inquire into the merits of the broad and narrow gauge, and into the best method of getting rid of the evil of “the break of gauge,” and of securing uniformity henceforth.¹ The commission asked for was appointed, and made a long report the next year. The commission reported, on the whole, in favor of the narrow gauge, and recommended that the Great Western should be accommodated to it,—a change which would cost only about 1,000,000*l*. The railway Board framed a Bill which departed from the recommendation of this report.² It recognized the narrow as the national gauge henceforth, but did not propose to alter the Great Western. On the contrary, it proposed to construct various branches of that line on the broad gauge also. Their Bill, which was passed, disappointed the commercial public, and everybody else who saw that uniformity of gauge must be secured sooner or later; and that the longer it was put off, the greater would be the difficulty, while serious injury was meantime daily inflicted.

It was related, in our narrative of the preparation of the Poor-law, that some discontent was occasioned by that clause of the amended law by which the maintenance of illegitimate children was thrown upon the mothers; that the effect of this provision was manifestly and immediately good; but that a mistaken sentiment, injurious to the true interests of woman, caused a modification of the law, in 1839, by which it was

¹ Hansard, lxxxi. p. 1183.

² Comp. to Almanac, 1847, p. 56.

rendered more easy to reach the putative father, and compel him to bear the burden.¹ A further change was made this year, in consequence chiefly of the discontent existing among the Welsh peasantry on account of the bastardy law. Rebecca and her daughters insisted upon this as one of their chief grievances; and the commissioners of inquiry into the state of Wales reported the complaint emphatically. The consequence was, that a Bill was framed and passed, by which the mother was enabled to make application against the father, instead of its being made by parish officers; and a stronger compulsion was brought to bear upon the father.² The same Act made some alterations in the proportion between rates and ratable value; empowered some large towns to provide asylums for the houseless poor; and enabled the commissioners to combine parishes and unions in their several districts into school districts, and also into districts for the audit of accounts.

On the 14th of June, which was Friday, the House of Commons was startled by the presentation of a petition, the news of which produced strong excitement in London and the country during the non-parliamentary days of Saturday and Sunday. Four persons, of whom two were foreigners and two Chartists, sent up a petition, by the hands of Mr. Duncombe, complaining that letters which they had posted within the last month had been detained, broken open, and read, by certain of the authorities belonging to Her Majesty's Post-office.³ The petitioners declared "that they considered such a practice, introducing as it did the spy-system of foreign States, as repugnant to every principle of the British constitution, and subversive of the public confidence, which was so essential to a commercial country." They begged for a commission of inquiry, which should afford redress to themselves, and future security to all letter-writers. Mr. Duncombe desired an explanation, as he had warned the Home Secretary that he should do. Sir James Graham refused to explain more than that the allegations in the petition were in part untrue, — the letters of three of the signers having never, to the best of his belief, been meddled with; that, with regard to the fourth, he had acted in accordance with a law which had been renewed so recently as 1837; that, by that law, the Secretaries of State had the power of opening and detaining letters; and that, under this sanction, he had issued a warrant, since destroyed, for opening the letters of one of the petitioners. He would not say which of the four it was; but Joseph Mazzini was universally understood to be the one.

Sir James Graham himself, as a true Englishman, could hardly

¹ Ante, vol. iii. p. 328. ² Polit. Dict. i. p. 322. ³ Hansard, lxxv. p. 892.

quarrel with the excitement caused in the House and the country by this disclosure, though the popular indignation was directed against himself. It was a case in which the national heart and mind might well be excused for pronouncing judgment prior to the production of evidence. The evidence must now come out; and the Home Secretary knew how it would at last modify opinions about himself, and set him right with the nation: but meantime, though he had to run the gantlet through a long and bitter infliction of insults, he would, as a benevolent statesman, rather endure this than have seen the people apathetic or capable of levity about such a matter as the violation of epistolary confidence. His probation was terrible. The most cool and cautious newspapers gave out their cool and cautious reprobation of the act; and there was hardly a public print, a public speaker, or perhaps a private family, that did not heap insults or expressions of disgust upon his name. Advertisements of secure envelopes met the eye everywhere, and Anti-Graham wafers were shed abroad. Caricatures represented the Home Secretary as the spy of foreign potentates, and the tool of his brother-secretary for foreign affairs. Hundreds of people began to be sure that their letters had been tampered with. Testimonies to Mazzini's virtues appeared in the London journals; and obscure individuals rashly offered themselves as the medium of the correspondence of foreigners henceforth, under the impression that we were living under a spy system, which would not allow the exile to pour out his heart to his nearest relations till the government had first heard what he had to say. Here and there, an honorable and trusted person — as Mr. Warburton — defended Sir James Graham; but this only deepened the astonishment. Here and there, some rational person, as much a lover of liberty as the petitioners themselves, pointed out that we have no passport system, and now no stringent alien supervision; and that such a power of letter-opening as the law gave to the Secretaries of State was absolutely necessary for the frustration of conspiracy at home, and to prevent our country from becoming a nest of conspiracy against foreign governments in alliance with us; but such explanations excited little but indignation. And this was very well. It not only evidenced the honest and generous feeling of Englishmen on a matter of high morality: it enhanced the merit of the support given to Sir James Graham by other and rival statesmen when the right time came, and the impressiveness of his justification when the committees of inquiry presented their report.

There was a committee of each House, — secret, of course, but composed of men who commanded universal confidence. Their reports were in the hands of the public in August; and they

settled the question without any alteration of the law. It appeared — to the astonishment of the nation, which had lost all remembrance of the fact — that the Post-office was established on the express condition, notified in the preambles of the Acts, that the government should be entitled to inspect any letters that it chose. In the old, half-barbarous times, the people were willing to have their letters conveyed speedily and safely on that condition. The power had since been revised and confirmed; and, at the last date, in the year of Queen Victoria's accession. There was no doubt about the law of the case; and indeed there had been none, since ex-ministers of all parties had got up, one after another, in Parliament, to avow that they had used the power. Lord Tankerville testified to the existence of a warrant signed by Mr. Fox in 1782, ordering the detention of all letters addressed to foreign ministers; and of another warrant, directing that all letters addressed to Lord George Gordon should be opened.¹ Lord Normanby had used the power in Ireland for the detection of 'low Ribbonism which could not be ferreted out by other means.' Lord J. Russell had held Sir J. Graham's office in the full conviction that the law gave him the power under investigation, and that the sole question was how it was used.² On this point, the report of the committee was eminently satisfactory with regard to the conduct of Sir James Graham.³ He had not only done nothing more than had been done by all his predecessors, but he had been more scrupulous and more careful. He had seen the warrants destroyed at the first possible moment; whereas other ministers had been careless in allowing them to remain in existence. The specification of the number of warrants issued during a long course of years effectually calmed the public mind. From 1799 to 1844, the number of warrants issued was 372, — that is, a fraction above eight in a year; but, when it is considered that the average is so greatly exceeded in years of alarm as to amount to 28 in 1812, 20 in 1842, 17 in 1831, 16 in 1839, and so on, the Post-office may be considered practically inviolate; and it has since been so considered. The conclusion drawn from the whole inquiry was, that it would not be desirable to deprive the government of this power of frustrating conspiracy, in extraordinary cases; nor yet to surround the power with new legal restrictions which would raise it into a fresh and pernicious importance in the eyes both of rulers and the people. No steps, therefore, were taken in consequence of the reports, which had answered their purpose in bringing out a knowledge of the law and the facts of the case, for the benefit of all parties.

¹ Hansard, lxxv. p. 1330.

² Hansard, lxxv. p. 1285.

³ Hansard, lxxvi. p. 312.

One reason for the vehemence of indignation displayed on this occasion was, that a rumor prevailed that Signor Mazzini's letters had been examined at the desire of the Sardinian Minister, who thus made the British Cabinet a tool of foreign despotism. This was put an end to by a few words from the Duke of Wellington: "He was enabled to state that there was no foundation whatever for these rumors."¹

The new Alien Act of this session, its enlarged scope, and the perfect indifference with which it was received, Alien Act. show that Great Britain had no particular sympathy with the jealousies and fears of foreign despots. For some years past, the registration provisions of our alien law had been practically useless. The Act contained no provision for enforcing any penalty on the omission to register; and foreigners omitted it whenever it suited them. In 1842, out of 11,600 foreigners officially known to have landed, only 6084 registered under the Act.² Out of 794 who landed at Hull in that year, only one registered; at Southampton, out of 1174, not one; and, at Liverpool, no account whatever was kept of the foreigners who arrived. The time was clearly come for removing all impediments, real or nominal, to the settlement of foreigners in England. It would have been done very long before, but for the perpetual opposition of popular prejudice. The popular prejudice against aliens now seemed to be worn out; and the thing was done — liberally and thoroughly. Without delay, and at a trifling cost, foreigners could now secure the privileges of native subjects. They could secure from the Secretary of State a charter of naturalization more liberal than Parliament could formerly confer. The only exclusion was from Parliament and the Council-board; and even this exclusion might be cancelled through an appeal to Parliament. The new privileges were to extend, as of course, to aliens already resident in the country; and all women married to British subjects were naturalized *de facto*. Such was the scope of the measure of which Mr. Hutt, the mover, said: "He believed it would be productive of much real practical advantage, and that it would conduce to the reputation of the country."³ He had to express his acknowledgments to Sir R. Peel for much kindness and encouragement. In other times, attempts to settle this question on a sound and liberal basis had more than once convulsed the whole nation, and proved fatal to the existence of governments. To have been permitted to bring such a question to a final and peaceful conclusion was very gratifying to his feelings."

So far was this measure from convulsing the nation and peril-

¹ Hansard, lxxv. p. 985.

² Polit. Dict. i. p. 103.

³ Spectator, 1844, p. 723.

ling its rulers now, that we find the "Spectator" observing, the week after its passage, that it had "escaped the notice of the newspapers." Such was one of the effects of the enlightening and tranquillizing influences of long-continued peace.

CHAPTER XII.

THE mere existence of the rumor that the Sardinian government was jealous of the residence of Signor Mazzini in England points to a popular expectation of troubles in Italy, and, as a consequence, among the despotisms of Europe. It was so. Signs of approaching struggle multiplied to watchful eyes; and, while Eastern despotism and the claims of Western civilization were falling into a position of antagonism more distinct every day, the free nations of Western Europe, who must form the main strength on one side when the war of opinion should at length break out, were grievously disposed to quarrel among themselves.

A traveller in Russia reports a certain Prince K. to have pointed out to him, that Russia is now only 400 years distant from the invasion of barbarians, while Western Europe boasts an interval of 1400; and that an additional civilization of 1000 years makes an immeasurable change in the mind and manners of a people.¹ The conviction was now spreading everywhere, that peoples separated by the civilization of a thousand years could not much longer live in alliance and apparent peace; and that henceforth the more civilized party would have no release from watching the other, till the outbreak should happen that must decide which of them should prevail. In Western Europe, government had for many centuries been a purely political institution, constantly admitting more and more of the democratic principle. In Russia, which is even now more Asiatic than European, government is a religious institution; the Emperor stands before the eyes of his people as their priest, and in their catechism as a god. In proportion as communication of persons and of ideas increases, such differences as these must come into collision. If the Czar means to keep the mind of Russia from encroachment first, and revolution afterwards, it is necessary for him to guard his frontier well, and to uphold, as his outer defences, all existing despotisms. Whenever, therefore, these existing despotisms were perilled from within or from without, peace with Russia became more precari-

¹ Custine's Russia, i. p. 147.

ous, and the eventual outbreak was felt to be drawing on. The Emperor was, and is, in the habit of saying that nothing is further from his thoughts than conquest; that he has as much territory as any man can possibly wish for; and that he has enough to do to cherish and improve his Russian subjects. Supposing this to be perfectly sincere, it may become necessary, according to his views, — indispensable to the cherishing of his native subjects, — to extinguish communities which hold dangerous ideas. If that extinction should be tried where the work is easy, this is a sufficient reason for watchfulness on the part of the Western peoples. If it should be difficult, the struggle would be precisely that war of opinion for which the Western peoples were warned by political philosophers to prepare.

What vigilant eyes could see was this. The Emperor lost no opportunity of insulting the King of the French. Since the revolution of 1830, he had behaved with increasing rudeness; and now his temper was becoming as bitter as it had always been overbearing. In August, 1842, the King of Prussia had

Prussia. issued an ordinance calling together the elements of a popular representation; and, from that moment, Russian relations with Prussia became cool, distant, and threatening.

In September, 1843, there was a revolution in Greece, — a revolution so needed, and so universally desired, that the

Greece. people obtained a constitution without any struggle, and England and France, and even Austria, uttered not one word of rebuke or remonstrance; but, when the Greek Assembly began its sittings, an armed Russian steamer appeared at the Piræus, the Russian ambassador was summoned on board, and he was carried off without being even allowed to land.¹ He was dismissed with disgrace from the service of the Emperor, and his papers seized. At the same time, the brightness of Russian

Austria. favor shone on the Court at Vienna during a conference which was held there, — a conference ill suited to the date of 1844. Plenipotentiaries from the German States met Prince Metternich at Vienna, to hear from him how perilous was the popular desire for an extension of the powers of the Chambers. "It perverts youth," said the gray-headed Minister, "and seduces even men of mature age."² It was settled at this conference that any extension of the rights of the Chambers was a direct injury to the rights of the Crown; that, in case of any appeal by the Chambers to the constitution, the government alone should be the interpreter of the constitution; that the acts of the Chambers, while legal, should stand, as far as the government should think proper; and so on, through a series of twenty resolutions, all consonant to the Czar's modes of thinking, and

¹ Annual Register, 1843, p. 314.

² Annual Register, 1844, p. 278.

certain to insure that brilliant favor with which he was now regarding the Austrian court. In the Caucasus, the Emperor was pushing the war with the desperation of ^{The Caucasus.} despotic wrath.¹ In one season, the fever cut off 5000 of his soldiers; and his forces were surrounded by fire in the forests, obstructed by barricades at all openings, and crushed in the passes by rocks rolled from above; 2000 officers were slain in one campaign, and the general-in-chief, Woronzoff, appeared with a countenance of deep melancholy at its close,—melancholy on account of slain comrades and his suffering forces; yet was every officer disgraced who made any failure in any expedition against the Circassians; and the Circassian patriots were spoken of and treated as vermin, fit only to be exterminated. In Serbia, again, he appeared as an avenging despot, after having declared himself, in the Treaty of Adrianople, the ^{Servia.} protector of Serbia, granting certain rights and liberties to the Servians.² The Servians expelled a prince whom they detested, and elected one whom they loved. Turkey let them alone; but Russia interfered, proscribing, banishing, insisting on new elections, terrifying the people into submission, but by no means increasing their love for Russian protection, or their desire for Russian intercourses.³ We are told by an authority worthy of all respect, that, since the strange accidents which caused the Russian army to be encamped at Paris, not only has Russia declared herself the protector of the cause of monarchy in Europe, but her people have become fully persuaded, that, as other States fall to pieces under the explosive force of the democratic principle, Russia is to put them together again, and dispose of them at her pleasure. Absurd as this notion appears to us, it is sedulously declared wherever Russia has partisans, and especially in Germany. It appears to have been in the discharge of his assumed vocation, that the Czar achieved the last act of despotic meddling which falls within the period of our history,—the extinction of the independence of Cracow, in 1846. It has been related how Cracow. Cracow was insulted and overborne in 1836: in February, 1846, the Austrians, who held the city, were driven out by those who conceived themselves the proper inhabitants, and who were exasperated into the adventure of striking one more blow for the liberties of Poland.⁴ They were supported by an extensive insurrection in Silesia, and for a time held their ground wonderfully. But they could not long resist the pressure of the three great Powers who now united to overthrow for ever the independence they had bound themselves by treaties to protect. The Austrian forces took the town of Podgorze, which commands

¹ Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 153.³ Edinburgh Review, lxxix. p. 388.² Annuaire Hist. 1844, p. 404.⁴ Annual Register, 1846, p. 304.

Cracow, from the opposite bank of the Vistula; the Prussian general, De Felden, invested Cracow, and the Russian troops marched into the city, without opposition. Without opposition, because all the inhabitants had fled except the aged and children. The three protecting Powers presently settled the case of Cracow among themselves. As the treaties of 1815 were entered into among themselves, they could not see that the rest of the world had any thing to do with the fate of Cracow, except to hear the news: and in November, therefore, they merely announced, with a condescending exhibition of reasons, that the republic of Cracow was no more; that the treaties were revoked; and that the city and territory of Cracow were annexed to, and for ever incorporated with, the Austrian monarchy.¹

As he held his position by a religious as well as political tenure, it was impossible for the Czar to tolerate varieties of religious faith. The Jews were made to feel this in 1843. By a ukase issued in that year, all Jews residing within fifteen leagues of the frontier were compelled to sell their goods on the instant, and repair to the interior of the empire.² All who could not convince the government that they held a position of which government was to be the judge, were sentenced to banishment to the steppes. The Jews were to be subject henceforth to recruiting for military service; and their children were held at the disposal of the Emperor for the naval service. For some time, the Pope and his Church had met with insolent treatment from the great potentate of the Greek Church; and, by this time, it was clear that the Pope was growing submissive through long-continued alarm. As his tone became subdued, that of the Czar grew gracious; and, in 1844, he restored his suspended diplomatic relations with Rome, by sending thither one of his ablest ministers from Constantinople. The chief ground of quarrel was supposed to be the persecution of the Poles by the Emperor, on account of their faith, and his oppressive attempts to bring them over to the Greek Church. When there was reason to believe that the aged and timid pontiff was willing to listen submissively, the Czar discovered that the air of Palermo would be good for the health of his Empress; and he was presently standing before the old Pope in the Vatican, giving an account of his treatment of the Latin Church in Poland, and listening to a more spirited remonstrance than it was at all his custom to hear. He wore a respectful air, knowing that the pontiff, then in his eightieth year, could not live long, and that it was inconceivable that the next Pope could have equal zeal for the Church, while events were showing that civil disturbance of every kind was in prepa-

¹ Annual Register, 1846, p. 308.

² Annuaire Hist. 1843, p. 295.

ration. And the Pope did die in the next year, leaving an inheritance of hopeless trouble to his successor.

Pope Gregory XVI. had been pontiff since February, 1831. Able as a propagandist, he was wholly unfit for civil rule; and the abuses of his realm were unreformed in his time, and so aggravated as to keep his subjects in a restive state, and all the despotic monarchs of Europe in a condition of perpetual alarm. With certain of the sovereigns he was on strange terms. We have seen something of his relations with the Czar. He granted to France, most unwillingly, the liberty of dealing harshly with the Jesuits; and he enjoyed, as his recompense, the friendship of the Orleans family and cabinet. His feud with Prussia about the affair of the Archbishop of Cologne was most serious,—serious enough, if the world had been three centuries younger, to have plunged all Europe in war. A more perplexing close of the controversy was avoided by the prudence of the new Sovereign of Prussia. Frederick William III. died in June, 1840.¹ His son declared an amnesty, which included the religious disputants among others. Then followed words of peace on both sides,—conciliatory charges on the part of the prelates,—declarations of satisfaction on the part of the King. The pope yielded nothing which the most zealous churchman could reproach him for; and the new King of Prussia evaded a perilous controversy with the papacy. In his civil government, Gregory XVI. was eminently unsuccessful. When the outcry about Signor Mazzini's letters being opened was raised in England, there was a universal presentiment that popular risings in Italy might be expected. The Pope had broken his promises of reform; his cardinals had governed with cruelty, as well as with their usual want of sense and knowledge of the men of their century; and the year before his death was imbibed to the old pontiff by fierce insurrections throughout his dominions.² The manifesto of the insurgents, exhibiting his broken promises and his acts of tyranny, must have struck upon his heart; and, for a few days, there seemed reason to suppose that the revolutionary party might succeed. Town after town declared against the ancient tyranny; and the papal troops went over to the Liberals. But a battle at Ravenna closed the struggle, by defeating and dispersing the insurgents. All was over for this time; but everybody was aware that it was only for a time. Italy was, of all the countries of Europe, the choicest skirmishing-ground for the coming war of opinion; and the papal realm, again, the choicest within the bounds of Italy. It was no gain to set against these perils, that Rome

Portugal.

was once more on good terms with Portugal, and was about to be

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1840, p. 423.

² *Annual Register*, 1845, p. 266.

so with Spain. The frequent revolutions in these countries, and the constant state of turbulence, in which the clergy suffered dreadfully, had long ago alienated the holy see. By the mediation of Austria, Portugal was reconciled with Rome; and, in 1846, it was a topic of warm discussion in the Cortes whether

Spain. Spain, already in friendly negotiation for the same object, might enter into a state of perfect affiliation, if

the mediation of England were sought, rather than that of France accepted. It was very well that there should be peace among those courts; but all three were so profoundly weak that it mattered little to the welfare of any but themselves what terms they were on.

In Switzerland there was much confusion during this period; warfare between the aristocratic and the democratic principles, and between the Catholic and Protestant faiths. It was not conceivable that the conflict of opinion should be brought to a close there, when it was kindling in other parts

of Europe. — In Hanover, the King was growing tired of hearing of poor officers' widows; and he issued an ordinance regulating the love-affairs of all the officers of the Hanoverian army.¹ They were not to betroth themselves without his permission; and the requisite permission was to be obtained by methods of application which it is astonishing that the most antique despot of our time should have dreamed of proposing to any body of men whatever. The ordinance can be regarded only as a decree for the increase of invalid marriages.

— Meantime, old Bernadotte, the most successful of Sweden. Napoleon's generals and monarchs, was gone. He came out of the Pyrenees as a private soldier, though a man of education. He died, in peace and beloved, the King of Sweden and Norway, leaving a son to succeed him who was more ready than he had proved himself to reform some of the grossest social and political abuses of the old feudal kingdom of Sweden, while cordially respecting the more democratic constitution of Norway. Charles John XIV., of Sweden, died in March, 1844, on his eighty-first birthday, after a reign of twenty-six years.²

Thus far, the movements and events that we have briefly detailed have been those in which Great Britain was not immediately concerned. Every incident, in a time when trouble and turbulence are on the increase from year to year, — even from month to month, — must concern every nation in the world; but our country had only to look on in regard to the events which have been related, whereas in others she had to judge and act.

In pursuance of their object of keeping Russia in check by preserving Turkey, the governments of England and France

¹ Annual Register, 1846, Chron. 55.

² Annuaire Hist. 1844, p. 395.

exerted themselves vigorously, in 1839, to prevent the threatened war between Turkey and Egypt. If, as seemed very possible, the Sultan should be beaten by his power-^{Turkey and Egypt.}ful vassal, the Czar might send his ships into the Bosphorus. The thing to be done was to prevent Turkey from being so weakened as to afford a pretext for this dangerous aid. The Pacha of Egypt declared himself ready for an accommodation: but the Sultan was too highly offended by the haughty assumptions of his vassal to give up the hope of punishing him; and he declared this war to be a duty required of him by his function of high priest of Islamism. War was proclaimed,—the Pacha and his son declared to be deposed,—and the fleet ready for sailing early in June, 1839. Syria was the field of conflict; and every thing seemed to depend on whether the Syrian population would or would not rise against the Egyptians. Some observers declared that the Syrians hated the Egyptians; others, that they favored them. The truth appears to have been, that their taxation under Egyptian rule was very oppressive, but that other causes swayed the likings of large bodies of the people; as, for instance, the toleration afforded to the Christians by Egypt,—a toleration never to be expected from the Porte. On the first meeting of the armies, Ibrahim, the heir of the Egyptian viceroyalty, won a splendid victory. Before the news of the defeat of the Turks could reach Constantinople, the Sultan was dead. His son and successor was only seventeen years of age. His accession afforded an opportunity for a change of policy.¹ He changed his ministers and his ambassadors at the European courts; and then offered to Mohammed Ali pardon and the perpetual succession of his family to power in Egypt, if he would submit and be at peace. The Pacha declared himself willing to do so if the dominion over Syria and Candia were secured to his family, as well as that of Egypt.

The five Powers — England, France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria — here assumed the management of the affair. While their envoys consulted in London, the French and English fleets cruised in the Levant to keep the truce. The case was now much perplexed by the Turkish admiral having carried his ships to Alexandria, and put them into the power of the Pacha. A suspicion was abroad, that the French government encouraged the Pacha to retain this fleet, when he would otherwise have given it up; and, at the same time, it was whispered in London, and thence spread into other countries, that three of the five Powers would make the restitution of the fleet and the surrender of Syria indispensable conditions of the Pacha's retaining even the hereditary dominion over Egypt. However this might

¹ Annual Register, 1839, p. 411.

be, the old Viceroy was active in raising troops, drilling the navy, and preparing for decisive war. The five Powers were, however, so long over their work, that all the world grew tired, — and especially Turkey, the party most interested. The Turks began to think that they could come to an understanding with the Pacha, if they were let alone; and, as the Pacha had repeatedly declared that the Prime Minister at the Porte, Khosrou Pacha, was the mischief-maker who prevented an accommodation, the Turks deposed Khosrou Pacha in June, 1840. The fleet was not, however, rendered up by the time four of the five Powers — France being omitted — signed a convention on the 15th of July. The Pacha delayed about accepting the terms offered. The Sultan grew angry, and declared him deposed; and then, very naturally, the Pacha concluded that all was over, and prepared for the worst. Then the British vessels in the Levant blockaded Alexandria and the Syrian ports; and, in September, they bombarded Beirout. The Egyptians lost ground everywhere; and, in November, Acre fell before the attacks of the allied squadrons.¹ Jerusalem returned to its allegiance to the Porte; and the Egyptians had no other hope than that of getting back to the Nile, with a remnant of their force. When assured that he would be secured in the viceroyalty of Egypt, if he delivered up the Turkish fleet and evacuated Syria, Mohammed Ali did so; and, in return, received the firman which gave the dominion of Egypt to himself and his heirs.

Some weeks afterwards, however, the Porte sought to impose the disagreeable condition, that the Sultan should choose among the heirs, at the time of the death of any viceroy, the one he should prefer. The five Powers protected the Pacha from this encroachment, and his affairs were at last considered settled. From that time to the day of his death, he was wont to taunt European travellers with the state of Syria, and ask them if they did not wish it back in his hands. And it was quite true, that, under his rule, the roads were as safe for travellers as he had made his great highway of the Nile; while in Syria there was nothing that could be called government, and the roads were infested with marauders. The Christians of the Lebanon would not settle under Turkish rule. Some heavy taxes and the conscription were gone; but now there was no security for life and property. The most curious circumstance is, that different tribes of Christians in the Lebanon, who had for some time been at war with each other, were believed by the European officers stationed in Syria to be fighting out the quarrels which had risen up between England, France, and Russia, in the course of their conference on Eastern affairs, — the Maronites being supposed to be

¹ Annual Register, 1840, p. 191.

in the interest of France, the Druses of England, and the Greek Christians of Russia. A charge had before been brought against the British government of raising the tribes of the Lebanon against the Pacha's rule,—a charge emphatically denied by Lord Palmerston; and now, in 1841, the jealousies between the French and English in Syria and Egypt were becoming as absurdly bitter as such jealousies are when indulged in so far from home, and amidst the *ennui* of a foreign station.

Before entering upon the controversies which arose among the five Powers, we must point out to notice the remarkable self-command of the Pacha in opposing no difficulty to the passage of the English through Egypt, *en route* for India. The injury to Great Britain would have been enormous, if this route had been closed, and she had been forced back upon her old track by the Cape. However certain it might be that Mohammed Ali would eventually have suffered by any vindictive use of his power over this passage to India, it must be regarded as a proof of a wisdom and self-command astonishing in a man of his origin and circumstances, that he never spoke a word nor lifted a finger in obstruction, but allowed the English to pass to the Red Sea as freely as if no mortal controversy were pending.

Towards the end of 1840, a leading journal at Paris is found saying: "We have confided for ten years in the alliance

France.

of England; we confide in it no more. We stand alone, and alone are prepared to maintain, if need be, the balance of power, and independence of Europe. Paris, without defence, involves the safety of the whole country; Paris, fortified, will prove its bulwark." Here was the subject

War spirit.

of the fortifications revived. The occasion, or the pretext, for resuming the works was the expectation of war with England; and the occasion, or the pretext, for expecting a war with England was the difference that had arisen about the Eastern question. France believed that the safety of Turkey would be best secured by putting Syria under the rule of the Pacha, and that the Pacha would prove quiet and trustworthy when once settled in his guaranteed dominion.¹ The other four Powers believed that the ambition of the Pacha would keep him always restless; and that, if he was not now kept in bounds, there might be no end to the disturbance he might cause, and the incursions he would make. Meanwhile, time pressed. The risings in the Lebanon stimulated the members of the convention. If France could not come over to their view, neither could they wait; and thus it was that the treaty of July 15 was signed by four Powers, to the exclusion of France. France was jealous, and remonstrated through her Minister, M. Guizot; and, next, she became quick-sighted to

¹ Mem. of Lord Palmerston, Aug. 31, 1840.

see "concealed menaces" in the declaration of the convention for the pacification of the Levant.¹ She next saw, in imagination, the combined forces of the four Powers—or at least the armies of England—marching into France; and hence the renewed cry for the fortification of Paris. In October, the French really believed war with England to be inevitable. M. Thiers, the Prime Minister of France, had instructed M. Guizot to say, that France would consider it a cause of war if Mohammed Ali should be driven from Egypt as British and Turkish cannon were driving him out of Syria; and, just after, the young Sultan committed that foolish act of haste,—declaring the deposition of Mohammed Ali. When the news reached France, the politicians and journalists of France declared that a true *casus belli* had now occurred. It was not so; for England could and did immediately prove that she was resolved to secure to the Pacha the dominion of Egypt; but the war spirit did not decline in France, in consequence of this or of any other explanation that could be afforded. The King was known to be as earnestly in favor of peace as his Minister, M. Thiers, was disposed for war. Men were speculating on which would prevail, when occasion arrived for deciding the matter for the moment. The King and his Minister could not agree about the speech to be delivered at the opening of the Chambers. The Minister desired to announce a vast new levy of troops: the King would not hear of it; and the Minister resigned, with all his colleagues. In Queen Victoria's speech at the end of the preceding session, France had not been mentioned at all, though a notification had been given of the convention for the pacification of the Levant; and the French had complained bitterly of this as a slight. In the speech of the King of the French, no such slight was offered in return; for the mention of the four Powers was serious enough. Amidst the deep silence of a listening auditory, as numerous as the Chambers could contain, the King announced that the convention and its declaration imposed grave duties on him; that he prized the dignity of France as much as its tranquillity; that the reasons for the extraordinary credits which had been opened would be readily understood; and that he hoped, after all, that peace would be preserved.²

There was no reason, indeed, why it should not. The affairs of the East were soon considered settled: "it takes two to make a quarrel;" and none of the four Powers had any present cause of war against France. If there was to be a war, France must begin. She did not begin; and all the world knew that a war-like Ministry had been dismissed for a pacific one. In a little while, the chances of peace were further improved by Lord Aberdeen's entrance upon the foreign office in London, in the place

¹ Mem. of M. Guizot, July 24, 1840.

² Annuaire Hist. 1840, p. 310.

of Lord Palmerston. Rightly or wrongly, Lord Palmerston was supposed to have an extraordinary talent for creating uncomfortable feelings in foreign allies, and for bringing on awkward and critical events. He was regarded as a busy, clever, imperious man, very trying to have to do with; while Lord Aberdeen was found to be the high-bred gentleman of the diplomatic world, — liberal, quiet, not apt to interfere, but frank when actually engaged in affairs, as watchful as inoffensive, and, without supineness, disposed to put a good construction on the acts of allies, and to make allowance for the mere harmless irritability of weak and harassed rulers of any country less happy than our own. It was well that the ministers on both sides of the Channel were, in 1841, men of peace; for the war party in France, which was noisy beyond all proportion to its numbers, and which had actually obtained possession of too much of the journalism of the time, was insane enough to laud a speech of a turbulent deputy, in favor of an alliance with Russia against England, and to raise this into a temporary popular demand. If such a thing could have been, the war of opinion would have presented a curious aspect indeed. Meantime, money for fortifications was voted, — the wall and the detached forts were to be carried on together, and with vigor, — and the ministers procured for the government the right of constructing the works in any way it pleased; a privilege against which M. Odillon Barrot protested in a manner which now appears very significant, — lest those fortifications should hereafter be used to overawe and injure the people of Paris. It was on the 1st of April that the final vote was taken.¹

At the end of the year, a treaty was signed which occasioned new trouble hereafter. By this treaty, signed in ^{Right of} London on the 20th of December, France, Austria, ^{search.} Russia, and Prussia agreed with England to adopt her laws in regard to the slave-trade.² Hence arose the subsequent difficulties and disputes about the right of search. As the slave-trade was declared to be piracy, and those who carried it on to be guilty of felony, it naturally followed, that these five Powers conceded to each other the right of searching all vessels carrying their respective flags, which were under suspicion of having slaves on board. The vigilant war-party immediately declared an apprehension that the independence of the French flag might suffer; and they actually carried in the Chamber of Deputies an admonitory resolution, in favor of which the whole Chamber voted, except the five ministers who sat there. The fact was, some difficulties had occurred with American vessels on the high seas, and some consequent dispute with the United-States government about the right of search; and some mistakes in practice had been

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1841, p. 66.

² *Annuaire Hist.* 1841, p. 254.

made, owing, as the French ministers emphatically declared, not to the treaty of 1841, or any other treaty, but to instructions to cruisers, issued by Lord Palmerston; and these things suggested to the war-party the cry about the honor of the French flag. The debates about this question in the French Chambers, on occasion of the address, in the session of 1842, merged into discussion of the value of the English alliance; when the ministers, Guizot and Soult especially, spoke so manfully in the cause of peace, reasonableness, and the English alliance, that the opposition interrupted them with cries that theirs were English speeches. Two particulars are memorable, in regard to the debate. It was declared, without contradiction, that all practical annoyance under the provision for search had occurred during Lord Palmerston's term of office; and that, since Lord Aberdeen succeeded him, there had been none.¹ And M. Guizot avowed that the chances of peace were improving every day; that a more just feeling towards England was beginning to prevail; and that the moderation and patience of the Cabinet of London, as well as that of Paris, was constantly imparting solidity to the relations of the two countries.² And yet this was at a time when the warfare of the press was the most violent. The French journals were emulated in their spirit of animosity and their power of provoking by a London paper, the "Morning Chronicle;" whose tone was resented by the English public as a disgrace in which the national character ought not to be implicated. The general impression, at home and in France, was, that the war articles in the "Morning Chronicle" were Lord Palmerston's. Whether they were his or another's, they were as mischievous as they were otherwise indefensible.

In the sessions of 1843 and 1844, the French legislators had resolved that the commerce of the country should be replaced under the sole surveillance of the national flag: in 1845, M. Guizot avowed that the provisions of the treaty against the slave-trade had lost much of their force, and tended to impair the amity of the two nations; and that he hoped that the desired end might yet be reached by means perfectly safe.³ In truth, the right-of-search question was by this time put out of sight by new quarrels of so fierce a character, that the King declared, in his speech before the Chambers, that the good understanding of his government with England had at one time appeared in imminent danger of fatal interruption.

And yet events had happened which seemed almost inevitably to preclude hostile feelings, and the superficial irritability of minds not sufficiently occupied. The interest of our Queen, and of every member of her government, and of every good heart

¹ Annual Register, 1843, p. 269.

² Annual Register, 1843, p. 290.

³ *Annuaire Hist.* 1849, p. 9.

everywhere, was engaged on behalf of the unhappy King of the French and of his family, by an event which occurred in July, 1842. The Duke of Orleans, the heir of the French throne, was thrown out of a carriage, and killed. The deep grief of the aged father and of the fond mother was respected throughout Europe; and all hard thoughts must have been dismissed during the mournful period when the question of the regency was in course of settlement. The Duke de Nemours, the next brother of the Duke of Orleans, was to be Regent during the minority of the Count de Paris. This settled, the King prosecuted other plans for the security of the throne from which his family was so soon to pass. In 1843, two more of his children married; the Princess Clementine being united to Prince Augustus of Saxe-Coburg, and the Duke de Joinville to a Brazilian Princess, sister of the Emperor of the Brazils and of the Queen of Portugal. In September of the same year, Queen Victoria and her husband visited the King and Queen of the French at their country-seat, the Chateau d'Eu; and the warmth of their demonstrations of friendship, and the fervor with which the people cheered our young Sovereign wherever she appeared, seemed to indicate that the war-spirit had either never been widely prevalent or had died out. The visit was returned in the autumn of the next year, when Louis Philippe was received with a welcome as hearty as his people had offered to our Queen. The King lost no opportunity of saying,—and it was as late as the 13th of October when he finally spoke the words with emphasis,—that the aim and object of his policy had ever been a cordial amity with Great Britain;¹ yet, in the royal speech on the 26th of December, the King admitted that difficulties which might have become of the most serious importance had risen up between the British government and his own.² Discussions had been entered into which appeared to endanger the relations of the two States. These were gentle words indicating a perilous quarrel.

Death of the
Duke of
Orleans.

Royal visits.

The island once called Otaheite, and thus so well known to the readers of Cook's voyages, and now called Tahiti, had for some years been a British missionary station; and the Queen of the island, named Pomare, had been a religious pupil of our missionaries there. In September, 1842, Queen Pomare placed her dominions under the protection of France, by a treaty dated on the 9th of that month. Her subjects were not pleased. Some said she had been coerced to do the deed through fear of the French admiral, Dupetit Thouars, who hovered about her dominions. However this might be, the natives were vexed, and showed hostility to the French; and the French naturally

Tahiti.

¹ Annual Register, 1844, Chron. 119.

² Annuaire Hist. 1845, p. 3.

and immediately concluded that English intrigue was at the bottom of the discontent. The admiral appeared off the island in November, 1843, and required Queen Pomare to hoist the French flag over her own, or instead of it; and, on her refusal to do so, he landed troops, hauled down her flag, and made proclamation that the island belonged to France. Of the indefensible character of this act there can be no doubt; and the French government lost no time in disowning it. There was, however, a party in the Chamber, as well as outside, who, in the heat of animosity against England, declared that French honor would be wounded by the removal of the national flag set up by the admiral; while others alluded to the utility of having a piece of French territory in that part of the world.¹ In the debate brought on by this party, M. Guizot defended the conduct of Queen Pomare, declared that of England to be blameless and pacific, and severely censured the French admiral. When the English ministers were questioned in Parliament about the French treaty with Pomare, they had always said that they had nothing to object to it; that perfect religious liberty was assured by the treaty, and that the arrangement might probably be for the benefit of the inhabitants of the whole group of islands.² Lord Aberdeen had obtained from Paris assurances that the British missionaries would meet with all possible protection and encouragement. When the news of the aggression of the French admiral arrived, there was hardly time for any speculation before the disavowal of the French government was communicated. But, on the 29th of July, 1844, news was received which brought out stronger language from Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen than they had often used in Parliament.

A missionary, named Pritchard, had become British consul at Tahiti, some time before the arrival of Admiral Dupetit Thouars. When Queen Pomare was deposed, Mr. Pritchard resigned his office; but there had not yet been time for his resignation to be accepted, and he acted as consul till a reply arrived from England. He was supposed by the French to have fostered the discontents of the natives; and he was outraged accordingly by the leading commanders on the station. A French sentinel having been attacked and disarmed by the natives on the night of the 2d of March, Mr. Pritchard was seized "in reprisal," imprisoned, and released only on condition of his leaving the Pacific.³ He was carried away, without having seen his family, and reached England by way of Valparaiso. The British ministers declared in Parliament that the account was scarcely credible,—so impossible did it seem that such an outrage should have been

¹ M. Carné, Feb. 29.

² Hansard, lxxviii. pp. 1, 42.

³ Annual Register, 1844, p. 261.

offered under the circumstances ; but the reply of the French government to the remonstrances of England would soon arrive, when, no doubt, it would appear that the French King and his ministers would be as eager to disavow this act as that of dethroning the Queen of Tahiti.¹ After some little delay, the ministers announced, on the last day of the session, September 5, that the affair was satisfactorily settled, — the French government being willing to make pecuniary recompense to Mr. Pritchard for the wrongs he had suffered.² It would have been well if all had followed the lead of Sir R. Peel in declining to discuss the merits or demerits of Mr. Pritchard. Whatever his conduct might have been, whether wise or foolish, peaceable or irritating, the only question was whether he, as a British subject, had been outraged. He had ; and reparation was made. But there were citizens in England and France who tried to make a cause of quarrel out of the demeanor of the man ; with regard to which there could be no impartial evidence, and which had nothing to do with the affair. And, again, the persons who thought France would be dishonored by the removal of a flag which should never have been set up, were very capable of saying that French honor would suffer by making reparation to a man who was now doubly disliked because he had been injured. Thus, the state of feeling during the latter months of 1844 was such as to warrant the expressions of the King's speech in December.

Already other storm-clouds were showing themselves on the horizon. Ever since the accession of the young Queen Isabella, there had been a rivalry between French ^{Spanish} and English influence in Spain. ^{question.} The Regent Christina was a relation of the Orleans family, and some jealousy was excited by their friendly manners towards her. When she abdicated the regency in the autumn of 1840, leaving her daughter in the care of Espartero, she fled into France, repairing first to Marseilles, as if on her way to Naples, but presently turning her face towards Paris, after receiving letters thence. She was met by the King himself outside the city, and received with military honors ; and almost every newspaper in Europe detailed the particulars of a reception which was supposed to signify so much ; and, in the French Chambers, the government was called to account for permitting a course of action which would throw Spain into the arms of England.³ M. Guizot replied that France would faithfully support, if necessary, the throne of Isabella II., but would have nothing to do with the intestinal quarrels of Spain, and would receive any refugees in the way she thought proper. It was from Paris that Queen Christina wrote, in the ensuing summer, to claim the

¹ Spectator, 1844, p. 724.

² Spectator, 1844, p. 846.

³ Annuaire Hist. 1841, p. 4.

guardianship of her children, when the Cortes were in the act of appointing guardians. She had said, in a manifesto from *Marseilles*: "I have laid down my sceptre, and given up my daughters;" and the after-thought by which she revoked these words was believed everywhere to be a suggestion of King Louis Philippe's.¹ That after-thought was the cause of various risings in Spain. The Madrid insurrection terrified the poor children almost to death. They were on their knees in the innermost chamber of the palace while it was besieged by night, and nothing but the bravery of the halberdiers prevented the royal children from being seized. The insurgents used the name of Christina: she at first denied their right to do so, and then prevaricated to a degree which induced a general belief that she was employing her position at Paris to overthrow the existing regency of Spain, — a belief which, of course, set the English government closely on the watch.

In 1843, the Regent Espartero and his party fell into adversity, amidst the changing fortunes of civil war. Espartero and his family escaped to England, where their welcome was cordial. The Lord Mayor and corporation of London invited the Regent to a public dinner at the Mansion House. The King of the French did not appear to resent this. In his speech at the close of the year, he expressed his deep interest in the young Queen of Spain, on occasion of her having been declared of age while yet only thirteen years old; expressed hope that Spain would be in a more tranquil condition henceforward; and avowed that this hope was much strengthened by the perfect understanding which subsisted between the Queen of England and himself.²

In January, 1844, M. Guizot made disclosures of great importance in regard to the relations between France and England. After showing that, during a recent visit of the Duke de Bordeaux to London, under the name of the Comte de Chambord, no manifestations had been made in the least unfriendly to the existing government of France, he turned to the subject of Spain. He avowed that an honest and friendly appeal had been made to the English government, which had been responded to in a manner no less honest and friendly, — an appeal as to whether there was really any occasion for the rivalry of the two interests on the soil of Spain; whether there was any substantial ground for such rivalry; whether it was not, in truth, a struggle kept up merely as a matter of custom and tradition.³ This being admitted, an agreement had ensued, that all considerations should henceforth give way before the great object of securing the tranquillization and prosperity of Spain. The two cabinets had

¹ Annual Register, 1841, p. 264.

² Annual Register, 1843, p. 298.

³ *Annuaire Hist.* p. 25.

gone further still in their discussions and agreements. They had treated of the marriage of Isabella II.; and England had consented that no prince whose connection with the Spanish throne could be injurious to France should be permitted to marry the young Queen.

The first mention we meet with of the marriage of Isabella II. is in 1843, in the form of a disclaimer by the govern-^{Spanish}ment which drove out Espartero of any intention of ^{marriges.} carrying the Queen towards the Portuguese frontier, as had been reported, for the sake of marrying her to a prince of the family of Saxe-Coburg-Cohary, then on a visit to Lisbon.¹ From the time of M. Guizot's speech of January, 1844, the Queen's marriage was the prominent point of all discussions on Spain. In March, Christina returned to Spain, and was met by her daughters on the road to Madrid. On the 23d, they all entered Madrid in state. A vulture had hovered over the head of Espartero, it was said, when he last quitted it.² Now, when Christina was re-entering it, a dove flew into the carriage, and was taken to her bosom by the little Queen. Subsequent events sadly discredited the omen. In October, when a Bill for retrenching the chief safeguards and most liberal provisions of the constitution was brought forward, a clause was found in it which authorized the Queen to marry without the consent of the Cortes; and, at the same time, rumors went forth, assuming to be from authority, that it had been settled among the royal family of Spain, that the Queen should marry the Prince of Asturias, the son of Don Carlos. At the same time, again, — on the 13th of October, — Christina married the man whose mistress she had been for seven years, and by whom she had several children. Her marriage now involved questions, both political and pecuniary, of great consequence; questions as to the date at which, by this connection, she had forfeited her office of regent, and her annual allowance from the State, and her title of Queen-mother. The money and the title were now secured to her by special grants and decrees. But the question remained how the consent of the Pope to this marriage had been obtained; and whether, in fact, it had been obtained at all. While all this was discussed, the new ministers were frightened into altering their Bill so far as to continue the exclusion of the family of Don Carlos from connection with the throne of Spain; but this act was again neutralized by what the Pope had done. It came out that he had permitted the marriage of Christina on certain conditions, — one of which was, that all laws and decrees should be annulled which excluded the family of Don Carlos; and another, that Queen Isabella should marry the Prince of Asturias.³ In six months

¹ Annual Register, 1843, p. 304.

² Spectator, 1844, p. 318.

³ Spectator, 1844, p. 1038.

more, Don Carlos had resigned all claims to the Crown, in favor of his son. But this had no effect in forwarding any views as to the marriage of the prince with the Queen ; for, before the end of the year, all the world had heard that negotiations were proceeding for a marriage of the Queen with the Prince de Trapani, brother to the King of Naples and Christina, and therefore uncle to the Queen. But it soon appeared that nobody desired this marriage. The young girl herself disliked the prince ; her mother opposed his pretensions ; and there was no strong feeling abroad in the nation on his behalf. It was conjectured that the Queen would herself have chosen her cousin Don Enrique, the second son of Don Francisco de Paula, — a spirited young naval officer ; but when the Prime Minister, General Narvaez, was questioned in the Cortes, in January, 1846, he declared that the Queen appeared to have no wish to marry, and that the subject had not come under the consideration of the government at all. Other governments were more anxious ; and none involved itself so deeply as that of France.¹

A despatch of M. Guizot's, written in 1842, was in existence, which declared that all that France desired, in regard to the marriage of the Queen of Spain, was that she should take a husband from the House of Bourbon. The French princes might be set aside, and welcome ; an ample choice would remain among the families of the King of Naples, of Don Francisco de Paula, and Don Carlos. Only let it be a Bourbon, and that was enough. In February, 1846, however, we find the same Minister speaking in a very different tone to Lord Aberdeen, through the French Minister in London. M. Guizot now declared, that, for reasons assigned, no prince of the above-mentioned families could be the choice of the parties concerned ; and he intimated that any intrigue to marry the Queen to a prince of the house of Saxe-Coburg would be resisted by France.² There was a prince of that house whom the French government supposed that England was plotting to get married to the Queen ; and henceforth the relations between France and England became so unfriendly as to threaten war more seriously than at any time since the peace. Lord Palmerston returned to the foreign office in the summer ; and from that moment the controversy became painful and disgusting. It is not necessary for us to go through the disagreeable narrative, as our history closes at the date of the retirement of Lord Aberdeen. Suffice it, that, blind to coming events which were soon to sweep away all the plans and dissolve all the visions of ambition, the French King and his ministers made a bold push to place one of their own princes in close proximity to the Spanish throne, for the chance of his issue succeeding to it,

¹ Annual Register, 1846, p. 283.

² Annual Register, 1846, p. 284.

while the wretched young Queen was forced into a marriage with the elder brother of the Don Enrique whom she was supposed to favor. Her younger sister, aged fourteen, was married on the same day to the Duke de Montpensier, the youngest son of the King of the French. The English newspapers were furious in their wrath, as well as strong in their indignation, at the part acted by France. The fear was lest the crowns of France and Spain should ever be found on the same head. But this could not happen by any chance short of the death of all the Duke de Montpensier's elder brothers and their children, together with failure of issue from the Queen of Spain. Events have since happened which solemnly rebuke so presumptuous a forecast into the future, by removing the young bridegroom's family from the throne of France. The fury of dissension which prevailed during the controversy looks now childish enough. The true cause for regret is the paltering and shabbiness exhibited on the part of the French government in the conduct of the business, and the fidgetiness and heat of the British Minister (Lord Palmerston) about an affair which was not worth contesting at the risk of war between the two countries to whose keeping are confided the liberties of Europe. No possible question about the future descent of the Spanish Crown can be worth the discord of free States, on the verge of the outbreak of the war of opinion in Europe. It was understood, that the compulsion brought to bear on the young Queen by her mother, under French encouragement, was very cruel; and the marriage presently appeared before the world as an unhappy one. The two weddings took place on the 10th of October, 1846; and, at the end of the month, the French King received at his palace his little daughter-in-law, — the Spanish princess whom he had won into his family at the expense of the friendship of the Queen and people of England. "Men say," declared a newspaper of that date, "that Louis Philippe has sown the wind: time will show whether he or his successor will reap the revolutionary whirlwind."¹

During the period before us, changes had taken place among the royal races of France, while the people were carried on by the action of the government, slowly but surely, towards that revolutionary struggle which has since abased some of them, and exalted another, and created some new hope in a third party. The Duke d'Angoulême, who had for a large portion of his life expected to reign over France, died in 1844, and left his nephew, the Duke de Bordeaux, the sole representative of the claims of the elder Bourbons. The prince who had before troubled France with unsupported pretensions to the throne, as nephew of the Emperor—Prince Louis Napoleon—

Death of
the Duke
d'Angoulême.

¹ Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper, 1846, p. 325.

made a descent on Boulogne in August, 1840, even more absurd than the Strasburg attempt; and received, as his ^{Boulogne invasion.} retribution for his contemptible invasion of a kingdom, an imprisonment in the fortress of Ham, whence he escaped, after a seclusion of six years, in the dress of a workman.¹ Though no wisdom had thus far marked his proceedings, it may finally be proved of some importance to France that his life was not taken on an occasion which would have justified the sentence in the eyes of the world. In the same year, the remains of ^{Napoleon's remains.} his uncle, the Emperor, were brought from St. Helena, under the care of one of the Orleans princes, and solemnly buried in the Hôtel des Invalides, in the presence of all Paris, — the Orleans family paying all the honors personally.²

The African conquests of France still yielded more trouble and cost than glory or gain; and to the dark side of ^{Algeria.} the account was now to be added shame, deep and ineffaceable. The native Arabs and Moors were no nearer being conquered than ever; and the noble defender of his race and religion, the Emir Abd-el-Kader, a hero worthy of any country and any age, was still the invincible foe of the invaders. In the belief that he was countenanced by the Emperor of Morocco, the French made war upon that potentate; and the Prince de Joinville bombarded Tangier on the 6th of August, 1844, in spite of the preventive efforts of Mr. Hay, the British Chargé d'Affaires in that place. No results of importance ensued; for which various causes were assigned by French writers: but all agree that England interfered to promote peace, on terms as favorable to Morocco as could be obtained. Abd-el-Kader, meantime, was as restless as ever, incessantly harassing the French force, without receiving any injury in return. Perhaps the exasperation of the French commanders in Algeria from this cause might be the influence which so turned the brain of one of them as to induce him to stain the glory of the French arms by an act of atrocity unequalled in modern times. There was a tribe of Kabyle Arabs which had never been conquered, because they retired upon a rocky district perforated with caverns. Colonel Pelissier roasted and suffocated this tribe in their retreat by kindling fires at the entrance. When escape was first offered them, on condition of surrender, they refused; and such of the women as attempted to fly were shot by their husbands, who considered it a case of martyrdom for religion. They, and their families, and their cattle, — 500 human beings found dead, and more who died when taken out, — were roasted or suffocated. But Europe found a voice on their behalf. A cry of reprobation ran over all civilized countries. In France, however, the chronicler of the times offers

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1840, p. 307.

² *Annuaire Hist.* 1840, Chron. 314.

only a very brief comment. "Such," he says, "are the necessary consequences of a war incessantly rekindled by fanaticism."¹

In seeking to determine the position held by France in regard to the conflict now beginning between the Eastern despotic and the Western self-governing principle, it is indispensable to consider the view propounded by the Foreign Minister of France in the critical period of 1842. However M. Guizot may M. Guizot
in 1842. have afterwards stooped from his declared position,

and lost sight of a broad theory of European policy in a low pursuit of selfish and fantastical national ambition, at the bidding of a man unworthy to be obeyed by such a one as he, he spoke in 1842 from his own mind and heart, — and his view ought to remain on record. France had come out of the isolation in which she stood at the time of the Brunow Convention, and was again placed in friendly relations with the other four Powers, when, on the 19th of January, 1842, M. Guizot said in the Chamber of Deputies: "Some are alarmed at the words 'European concert.'² But do those words mean that the Holy Alliance is revived? No. That which is called European concert is simply the spirit of peace among the great Powers. It is the manifestation of that accordant mind, which, in case of any critical event occurring, would endeavor to understand and resolve the great political question, before having recourse to the chances of war. It is to this policy, that, for more than twenty years, Europe has been indebted for peace. It is to this policy that Greece and Belgium owe their existence. Never before were mighty events accomplished so pacifically, and conducted so regularly, by negotiation alone, under the influence of European good sense. There are but three political systems possible for any country, — alliance, isolation, or independence in the midst of good understanding. For intimate alliances, the time is passed. As for the policy of isolation, it is a transitory policy which is connected with a position more or less critical and revolutionary. It is necessarily adopted on occasion, but should never be reduced into a system. Besides, an intimate alliance between France and England involves the inconvenience of cementing the alliance between the three great continental Powers. The policy of isolation involves the yet greater inconvenience of inducing the alliance of the four great Powers. There remains, then, the policy of independence in the midst of amity, — and this is the policy upon which France has entered."

In another view, France left herself free to form alliances hereafter as future events might indicate.

The relations of England with the United States were as precarious as those with France, during this period. First, there

¹ *Annuaire Hist.* 1845, p. 252.

² *Annuaire Hist.* 1842, p. 17.

was a dispute arising out of the Canadian troubles of 1837. A steamboat, the "Caroline," belonging to an American owner, had conveyed arms and stores to a party of Canadian insurgents on Navy Island. Some loyalists seized the vessel, and sent her down the Falls of Niagara; and, in the scuffle, an American citizen was killed. One M'Leod, a British subject, was arrested when transacting business in the State of New York, charged with participation in the destruction of the "Caroline," and in the murder of Durfee, the slain man. The British Minister protested against the process, declaring the act to have been done in obedience to the colonial authorities, and therefore to be a subject for explanation between the two governments, and not for the trial of an individual in the courts of law. The British government did fully assume the responsibility of the act of destroying the "Caroline;" but not for this would the American authorities liberate M'Leod.¹ A popular assemblage overawed the magistrates when they were about to release him on bail; and this complicated the affair perilously. So did the report of a committee of Congress on the question, which was little short of a declaration of war; but it was presently understood that the report had had the concurrence of a bare majority in committee. The next difficulty was, that the State of New York claimed to try the prisoner for offences committed against the State citizens, instead of those of the Union; and thus the question, as between the two governments, was evaded. M'Leod was tried at Utica, in the State of New York. Fortunately, there was unquestionable evidence of M'Leod's absence from the scene of the destruction of the "Caroline." The plea of an *alibi* was too strong to be withstood; the jury returned a verdict of acquittal, and the danger was over for the time. Some foolish Canadians, however, did what they could to embroil us afresh. They made an incursion into the United-States territory, and seized a Colonel Grogan, whom they accused of incendiary outrage; but the Canadian authorities ordered the instant discharge of Colonel Grogan, and no more was heard of the matter.² It remained a subject of serious uneasiness to both governments, however, that outrages were perpetually taking place on the frontier. The Canadian loyalists were insulting and violent; the American adventurers who infested the boundary delighted in raids and skirmishes, and the Federal government had not power to restrain them, — owing to certain limitations of its functions, and a partition of power between itself and the States along the frontier. Every one was aware, that, under the difficulties of the case, much would depend on the character and temper of the President of the Republic.

¹ Mr. Fox's Note of March 12.

² Annual Register, 1841, p. 317.

General Harrison entered upon the office in March of this year, 1841; but, before any clear anticipation could be formed of his temper and policy, he died,—only four ^{American} presidents. weeks after his entrance upon office.¹ By the regulation provided for such a possible case, he was succeeded in his function by the vice-president, Mr. Tyler; and it remained to be seen how the affairs of the States would go on under the rule—for the first time—of a president who had not been elected to that office by the people.

The right-of-search question was becoming a cause of controversy before the McLeod affair was settled; and now ^{Right of} the controversy was fast growing into a quarrel. ^{search.} The American Minister in London maintained that the right existed only under certain treaties; and that countries, which, like the United States, had refused participation in such treaties, could not permit their vessels to be searched for evidence of traffic in slaves, or on any other pretence. Lord Palmerston had, before going out of office, admitted this; but shown that the difficulty arose from slavers hoisting, unauthorized, any flag that might suit their purpose best.² All that was claimed was,—not a right to search American merchantmen, but merely to examine their ships' papers, to ascertain whether they really were American vessels. Without this, there could be no security against the slave-traffic of the world being carried on under the flags of those countries which did not participate in the treaties. It will be seen what a wide field of international law was extended for argumentation when Lord Aberdeen came into office. In the following December, Lord Aberdeen communicated to the American Minister the nature of the instructions given to British cruisers; and the frank and temperate explanations of the two ministers led to happy results. The President said of them in a message to the Representatives: "These declarations may well lead us to doubt whether the apparent difference between the two governments is not rather one of definition than of principle."³ And again: "It seems obvious to remark, that a right which is only to be exercised under such restrictions and precautions and risk, in case of any assignable damage to be followed by the consequences of a trespass, can scarcely be considered any thing more than a privilege asked for, and either conceded or withheld on the usual principles of international comity." The President's lead was followed by Congress. Congress agreed that the honor of the American flag "demanded that it should not be used by others to cover an iniquitous traffic;" and, like the President, Congress "chose to make a practical settlement of the question." And

¹ Annual Register, Chron. 194.

² Annual Register, 1842, p. 309.

³ Annual Register, 1843, p. 318.

thus, without any concession being made on the side of Great Britain, but only by means of her object becoming better understood, it was settled, that, on any fair occasion of suspicion whether the United-States flag was shown rightfully or as a pretence, she might require the production of the ship's papers, under the liability of making reparation for damage or delay, if the vessel should be found to be really American. The Americans also agree to keep a squadron off the coast of Africa, to guard against abuse of the American flag. And thus, in the spring of 1843, was the right-of-search question settled with the United States.

Some complications had occurred in the course of the controversy which threatened to prevent its amicable adjustment.¹ A Virginian brig, called the "Creole," was on its way to New Orleans in October, 1841, when some slaves, who formed part of the cargo, obtained possession of the ship, wounded the captain and some of the crew, killed a passenger who was the owner of some of their number, and then carried the vessel to Nassau, in New Providence, one of the West-India Islands. On the requisition of the American consul, the magistrates of Nassau detained and imprisoned nineteen negroes who were charged with participation in the mutiny and murder. The rest, 114 in number, against whom there was no charge, were allowed to go where they would, under the British law that every slave becomes free on touching British soil. The Governor of the Bahamas refused to detain them, and also to forward the nineteen to America till he received directions from home. The law-officers and law-peers of England gave a unanimous opinion, that there was no law of the empire under which the persons charged could be tried, or even detained; and the Governor of Nassau was therefore instructed to release the nineteen negroes, unless there was any peculiar colonial law under which they could be tried.² The wrath of some of the slave States was loud, and there was talk of bloody consequences; but our newspapers said, throughout, "We shall not need to go to war about the "Creole;" and so it proved. The American requisition was withdrawn, and the slaveholders grew tired, at last, of charging Great Britain with abetting piracy and murder.

There was much ruffling of temper on other subjects. A great number of Americans, who did not understand our politics, "sympathized" with the Irish repealers, sent money, promised men, and avowed themselves ready to abet treason on behalf of Ireland to any extent. On the other hand, a great number of Englishmen, who did not understand American affairs, grossly insulted the whole American nation, on account

Repeal
sympathy.

¹ Spectator, 1842, p. 49.

² Hansard, lx. p. 320.

of the delinquency of a very small number in the semi-barbarous States, about their State finances. Three of these semi-barbarous States repudiated their public debts; and Pennsylvania and one more delayed the payment of their dividends.

Pennsylvania never repudiated, though, following a ^{Repudiation.} mistake of Sydney Smith's, people in London supposed and said that she did. Such persons knew nothing of the peculiarities of the half-German population of Pennsylvania, ignorant and slow; and forgot the unequalled pressure and perplexity she had been subjected to by the action of President Jackson on the banks, and the consequent extinction of her currency for a time. They knew nothing of the miseries of the inhabitants, when reduced to a state of barter; and, in this condition of ignorance, they charged her with a "repudiation" which her subsequent payments have shown her not to have contemplated. If it is said that people in London could not be expected to know these things, the answer is plain: that they should not invest their money in foreign funds without understanding the circumstances of the case, nor accept extraordinary interest for their investment without being prepared for a corresponding risk. The New-England States, which head the Union, have ever preserved an unblemished honor; and so have most of the rest. The few which have not were unfit to be trusted, and might have been known to be so by any one who understood what the border States are, with the institution of slavery on the one hand, and the wilds of the Mississippi on the other; and within them a population largely composed of persons who prefer a semi-barbarous to a highly civilized state of society. But, in the wrath of British claimants on certain State funds at the failure of their dividends, the thirty States and the whole American nation were mixed up together under a charge of cool knavery; and the temper of both nations was any thing but ameliorated. Some men who ought to have known better were for petitioning Congress about an affair of State debts, with which Congress had no more concern than the Parliament of any other country; and it could not be very soothing to the temper of the Americans to find, that our clergymen, members of Parliament, and merchants, did not take the trouble to learn even the outlines of the American constitution.

Then, in 1843 and 1844, public sentiment in England was awake and alive on the subject which was dividing the American nation, — the annexation of Texas, followed ^{Texas and Mexico.} by the invasion of Mexico. Dr. Channing was revered in England; his words went far and sank deep; and his reprobation of the annexation of Texas obtained a response from end to end of Great Britain. The noblest part of the American nation rejoiced in our sympathy, and in our perception that the action of

their country upon Texas and Mexico was purely for the extension of slavery ; a safeguard for the institution now so shaken towards the North ; and a new field for its support, in preparation for its abolition in the States which it had exhausted and impoverished. But the noble are always the few ; and every expression of censure or disgust at the game that was playing against the interests of humanity kindled wrath among the majority in the States, who were eager for the excitement of war, and the glory of territorial aggrandizement.

While such was the temper of the two peoples towards each other, a question of more difficulty and more importance than any yet discussed had arisen between the two governments. It has been noticed before how surely trouble springs up, sooner or later, from the ignorance of geography which prevails when the boundaries of new countries are assigned. The frontier-line between the State of Maine and Canada could not be agreed upon by the British and the Americans, when the region became settled. It was a matter of high importance to the residents of the debated ground whether they lived under British or American government and laws ; and, in the existing temper of the two nations, it appeared too probable, that not only skirmishes would take place along the frontier, but that a national war might ensue. Sober people in England, now quieted and made reasonable by a quarter of a century of peace, could hardly conceive of such a thing as a national war for such a cause ; but it appears that the statesmen on both sides the Atlantic really apprehended such an issue. In 1839, Lord Palmerston had sent out commissioners to explore the line claimed by the British, and see whether it accorded with the features of the country ; and, after these commissioners had reported, two more were sent out to make a similar investigation into the line claimed by the Americans.¹ Their report, in 1841, was adverse to the American claim. Arbitration had before been tried, and had failed. The King of the Netherlands had pronounced on two points out of three, and declared the other impossible to settle. He had determined that the British were right as to which was the true river-head specified, and what the proper parallel of latitude ; but, as to which of two ranges of highlands was intended, there was no evidence to show. After some confusion, both parties declined the award. And thus there was no reason to hope any thing from arbitration. In this perplexity, Sir R. Peel's government chose the fittest man in Great Britain for the business, and sent Lord Ashburton's mission. him out as a special ambassador to Washington, fully empowered to settle all matters in dispute between the two governments. Lord Ashburton (late Mr. Baring), a thorough

¹ Hansard, lxiii. p. 564.

Englishman in mind and manners, was yet so connected with America by commercial and family relations as to have much sympathy with American feelings, and full knowledge of American institutions, customs, and modes of thought. He went out in February, 1842, was courteously and even joyfully received, and brought matters round presently. A treaty which settled the boundary question was signed on the 9th of August following. It was not to be supposed that everybody was satisfied. Lord Palmerston, for one, was sure to be displeased; and his prophecies of the dissatisfaction that would be felt, and the mischiefs that would arise, were very strong. But no difficulties have as yet been heard of; and the inestimable good of peace and national amity appears to have been obtained without sacrifice. The agreement gave 7-12ths of the disputed ground, and the British settlement of Madawaska, to the United States, and only 5-12ths of the ground to Britain; but it secured a better military frontier to England, and it included heights commanding the St. Lawrence, which the award of the King of Holland had assigned to the Americans.¹ The best testimony to the equality of the arrangements was the amount of discontent among American politicians being about equivalent to that declared in England. But, in both countries, the vast majority were satisfied and gratified; and the chances against war appeared to be stronger than for several years past. Lord Ashburton, after having been honored throughout every step of his travels in the United States, received the thanks of Parliament on his return home.²

All danger was not over, however. It has been mentioned before, that, in 1822, Lord Castlereagh told Mr. Rush, Oregon question. that such was the condition of the Oregon question between England and the United States, that war could be produced by holding up a finger.³ Now, after the lapse of twenty years, the question was as unsettled, and almost as perilous, as ever. It may be remembered that an agreement was made in the treaty of 1818-19, that, for a period of ten years, the Oregon territory should be open to occupation by settlers from both countries. The period was afterwards indefinitely extended. In 1843, the American President announced that he was going to negotiate with Great Britain for the final settlement of their claims to the Oregon territory. A push was immediately made in Congress to get Oregon occupied, and put under military organization, as territory belonging to the United States; and the restless among the vivacious American nation began to form and equip caravans for the long and dreary passage to Oregon, over and beyond the Rocky Mountains. They acted as if their

¹ Hansard, lxxvii. p. 1242.

² Hansard, lxxviii. p. 641.

³ Ante, vol. ii. p. 354.

national existence depended on their appropriating the whole available coast of the Pacific, and as if there were no rashness in tempting a crowd of emigrants to cross a desert continent, among myriads of buffaloes and through tribes of hostile Indians, to take possession of a district whose capabilities and conveniences were little known, and which might prove to be the property of a foreign power. Such rashness and indecent haste made the question of settlement more difficult, — British statesmen being disgusted, and American statesmen ashamed, without being able freely to say so. In the course of several conferences between the negotiators on each side in 1844, it was understood that the matter should be settled by compromise, — by dividing the territory lying along the Columbia River. The new president, Mr. Polk, avowed his dislike to any surrender whatever of the American claim; but declared that it was too late when he entered upon office to draw back from the compromise principle, — a declaration which made the majority on both sides of the Atlantic rejoice that that much was agreed upon before Mr. Polk became president. Throughout the session of 1845, the debates in Congress on the subject of Oregon were so conducted as apparently to impair grievously the chances of peace. But it is probable that their very violence wrought in the other direction. Statesmen, worthy of the name, on both sides, were better aware what they were about than boastful and quarrelsome orators; and the more arrogance and rancor that were expressed, the more were the negotiators stimulated to find a basis of agreement.

In his message of December, 1845, the American President used language of dogmatism, if not defiance, which some members of the Senate declared themselves unable to agree to. In the next month, Queen Victoria said, in her speech to Parliament, that she regretted the unsettled state of the Oregon question, and that no effort consistent with national honor should be wanting on her part to bring the controversy to an early and peaceful termination.¹ With these speeches before them, the American Houses of Congress went into debate. The debates were protracted through three months, ending on the 23d of April, with a signal and somewhat unexpected victory of the moderate party.² With a view to driving on the matter to a decision by force, the war-party had carried resolutions, that notice of the cessation of a joint occupancy of Oregon should be given to Great Britain. After a conference, it was settled that the resolution about such notice should stand, being accompanied by a declaration, that it was for the purpose of inducing a speedy amicable settlement of the dispute, on the ground of an equitable compromise. As soon as the news of this resolution arrived in England, Lord Aberdeen

¹ Hansard, lxxxiii. p. 3.

² Annual Register, 1846, p. 326.

sent out a new proposal of compromise to our Minister at Washington.¹ The President submitted the proposal to the Senate, who approved it by a large majority. The President then accepted the terms; and, in June, the treaty was signed which settled at last the Oregon question. Vancouver's Island remained to Great Britain, and the free navigation of the Columbia; and the territory in dispute was divided in a way which appears likely to be permanently satisfactory to both parties. Mr. Webster, indeed, avows his anticipation, that the combined population of Americans and British, similar in race and separated only by national distribution, will set up for themselves ere long, and form a republic on the Pacific. However that may be, they are no longer at war, or in anticipation of it. This happy act of reconciliation was one of the last to be perfected by Sir R. Peel's government, and the ultimate success of Lord Aberdeen's mild and discreet administration of our foreign affairs.

¹ Annual Register, 1846, p. 327.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN the records of Indian affairs during this period, we find a curious mingling of notices, — the formation of companies for the construction and management of railways, which are to encourage commerce and extend peace over the whole of those vast regions; and hints that the British may soon be compelled to interfere in the Punjaub, from the excesses that were perpetrated there against one after another of the rulers who succeeded Runjeet Singh. In 1845, we find the India Company addressing the Governor-general, Sir Henry Hardinge, on the subject of railways, in the evident anticipation that the peninsula may in time be intersected with them, so as completely to change its financial condition, and perhaps the character of its population; and, in the same year, — towards its close, — we see our territory invaded in the north-west, by an army of Sikhs crossing the Sutlej; whether with or without the sanction of the existing government at Lahore, was not immediately known. The Governor-general was in the north-west at the time, having had reason to expect some trouble there; and it was on the 13th of December that the decisive news reached him that a Sikh army had crossed the Sutlej. On the 18th, the battle of Moodkee was fought, under Sir Hugh Gough, when the Sikhs were beaten, but not effectually discomfited. In this battle fell Sir Robert Sale, the hero of Jelalabad; a man whom the whole nation would have been delighted to see enjoying his old age in England, after his long toils and sufferings in the East. Here, however, his left thigh was shattered by a ball, and he soon died of the wound. The next battle, that of Ferozshah, was rendered remarkable by the circumstance of the Governor-general offering his services to Sir Hugh Gough as second in command; and he actually remained in action in that capacity, conspicuously throughout the day. The foe proved more formidable than had been expected, — their skill appearing to equal their hardihood. It was no easy matter to vanquish them; but, after the battles on the 21st and 22d, they were routed, and their guns captured. Our loss was heavy; and even those who believed that the Punjaub was now quieted, and the

Sikhs silenced for ever, felt that these results were obtained at a severe cost. But there were not a few who foresaw what has since happened, — new conflicts, and the sad necessity of annexing the Punjaub to our territory, for the sake of peace, and of the safety of the inhabitants of the north-western provinces.

One more battle — that of Aliwal, fought on the 28th of January, 1846 — drove the Sikhs from our territory, and impelled them to take refuge in their last stronghold on the left bank of the Sutlej. From this position they were driven by the battle of Sobraon, on the 10th of February, when the Governor-general was again present under Sir H. Gough. The slaughter on our side was terrible enough; but that of the Sikhs was sickening to hear of. They were drowned in shoals in the river, and shot by hundreds as they attempted to escape into their own territory. They were followed by the British army; and the Governor-general undertook the arrangement of the affairs of the Punjaub. He believed, that, by the establishment of a protectorate, he had avoided the evil of the annexation of the territory. But time has proved him mistaken. The Sikhs have since risen again, and have again been chastised, almost to the point of destruction; and the Punjaub is now British territory.

A part of the work of the last parliamentary session we have to record was voting thanks and welcoming honors to the heroes of the Sikh war, — one of the briefest of our Indian wars, but one of the most brilliant. There was much heartiness of admiration on the occasion, but very little joy; rather, there was so much regret, that it was evident that thirty years of European peace had humanized the English mind, and raised it to a point of feeling which becomes a civilized nation compelled to enter the lists of brute conflict with a half-barbarous people. Sir Henry Hardinge and Sir Hugh Gough were raised to the peerage; and, when they and other heroes of the war returned to England, the national welcome awaited them wherever they went.

In 1843, the Sandwich Islands — the Hawaiian Islands, or old Owhyhee — were ceded by their king, Kamehamela, The Sandwich Islands. to Great Britain, because the poor Sovereign found himself embarrassed by claims of reparation for injury done to British subjects. The cession was not accepted; but our protection was promised to the islands as forming an independent State. It is amusing to find these poor people beginning at once with constitutional government. Their two Houses of Parliament — the House of Nobles and House of Representatives — met on the 20th of May, 1845; and the King delivered a speech, the tone of which is ludicrously like such as are delivered in London

and Paris.¹ The peculiarities of it are a provision for ascertaining whether the number of the people is increasing or diminishing; and a declaration that it is the possession of the Word of God which has introduced their people into the family of independent nations. The first vote of the Nobles was one of thanks to Great Britain, France, Belgium, and the United States, for recognizing the independence of the Hawaiian kingdom. This done, "the ministers presented their reports and estimates, and the ordinary business of the session commenced." We have been accustomed to think that constitutional government is a gradual and late growth of civilization,—a thing impossible to impose, and of which some old European nations are not yet capable. It can hardly be supposed that the Sandwich Islanders can maintain it pure; but they will probably be happier than under the despotic rule of an irresponsible king.

The desire for representative government was spreading among our own colonies.² In 1846, ten of them had made application for the boon. There had been much misgovernment; or the colonists thought so. Taxes trebled at a stroke, favoritism towards public officers, or ill-usage of them, quarrels between governors and their co-adjutors, tricks with the currency, executive extravagance,—such grievances as these, in colonies where the inhabitants now amounted to tens of thousands, made the residents desire to try whether they could not govern themselves better than they were governed by the colonial office.

Van Diemen's
Land.

In Van Diemen's Land, abuses of various kinds had reached such a pass, that the prosperity of the colony had stopped; and it was sinking into debt, though the taxes had been trebled in one day; and yet there were 35,000 free colonists who were without representation, while several western colonies had a representation before their numbers had reached a sixth part of this. A new governor was sent out to Van Diemen's Land, and it was recommended that the civil officers who had resigned in despair should be restored; but it remains a disgrace to successive governments, that the desire of our colonies for participation in the best privileges of the British constitution can scarcely obtain any attention.³ Next to Ireland, our colonies continue to be the opprobrium of our empire. In 1846, at the close of the period now under review, our colonies were forty-two, containing a population of 4,674,000. Twenty-five of the forty-two had representation; but most of these had a much smaller population than several colonies which were cruelly oppressed by the arbitrary rule of incapable governors; and the difficulty these had in making their complaints heard by the pub-

¹ Annual Register, 1845, p. 354.

² Hansard, lxxxviii. p. 714.

³ Hansard, lxxxviii. p. 716.

lie at home, and attended to by the government, was such as to bring upon the colonial office heavy, but just, imputations of rashness and tyranny. But for the occurrence of some outrageous case now and then, some abuse too gross to be covered up, there was, and still is, little hope of the colonies being so treated as to preserve their affection for the mother-country. For whatever reason it is so, — whether the business of the colonial office has outgrown its machinery, or bad traditions remain in force within it, or the frequent change of colonial ministers is fatal to consistent government, or the choice of those ministers has been eminently unfortunate, — whether these or other mischiefs be the cause, it certainly appears that the misgovernment of our colonies has long been so intolerable, that we cannot expect to retain them, unless some speedy and comprehensive reform is carried out.

One flagrant case of misgovernment, whose excess was of service, was that of South Australia under Governor ^{South} Gawler, whose extravagant expenditure involved the ^{Australia.} colony so deeply that it was scarcely hoped that it could ever revive. In 1841, an advance was made from the treasury at home of no less than 155,000*l.*; and the governor was desired to draw no more. He did not obey; his bills were dishonored; he was removed from office; and his successor, Captain Grey, found that the annual expenditure of the colony was 150,000*l.*, while its revenue was only 30,000*l.*¹ The needful sudden reduction of such an expenditure — which Governor Grey soon brought down to 35,000*l.* — occasioned great distress in the settlement; and society had almost to be organized afresh. The treasury at home had to pay 400,000*l.* for the relief of this unfortunate colony. Some advance towards giving a power of self-government to this colony and that of New South Wales was made, in 1842, by an enactment that their legislative council should consist partly of members elected by the people; and that, under royal sanction, a general assembly, chosen by popular election, might be convened.² South Australia was not a convict colony; but Sydney and Van Diemen's land were, and they therefore afforded an unsatisfactory ground of argument about colonial government. Claims of a representative system were easily met by displays of the difficulty of popular election in a community consisting largely of criminals; and arbitrary measures are easily and fairly justified on the plea of the untrustworthy character of a large element of the local society. But there is a colony of ours, lying alone in the sea, unconnected even in idea with the transportation system, and with every prerequisite for a perfect colonial experiment, whose fate shows something of what our colonial government is.

¹ Hansard, lxiv. 992.

² 5 and 6 Vict. c. 76, c. 61.

The New-Zealand Islands have a climate and soil which point them out for occupancy by British colonists. British New Zealand. emigrants were willing to go, and the inhabitants of New Zealand were eager to have them. The public at home showed an unusual desire to colonize these islands; and a company was formed for the purpose, in the face of the reluctance of the government, which threw every obstacle in the way. The main object of the company was to make trial of Mr. Wakefield's plan of self-supporting colonization. By this plan, the proceeds of the sale of land are applied to the bringing out labor, in a regulated proportion to the land; and the land and labor are sufficiently concentrated, so as to prevent the ruinous dispersion of inhabitants, and isolation of settlements, which makes colonization mere squatting, as to its social effects, when individuals are allowed to purchase more land than they can use, or to wander away beyond the reach of co-operation. The government adopted no steady principle about claiming the territory; and neither furnished the original colonists with a government, nor allowed them to govern themselves till they could be legislated for. The Governor sent out, Governor Hobson, seemed to think it the main business of himself and his officials to thwart and humble the officers of the company; and the most flourishing of the young colonies of England was damaged in every way by his influence,—in intercourse with the natives, in financial management, and in the spirits and temper of the settlers. In the summer of 1842, charges against Governor Hobson were transmitted by the colonists to the home government,—charges of ruinous extravagance, of permitting his official servants to make unfair selections of land, and of applying 40,000*l.* received for land-sales to other purposes than the prescribed one of bringing out labor.¹ Before inquiry could be made, Governor Hobson died, having saddled this colony, meant to be self-supporting, with a debt of 68,000*l.* Captain Fitzroy was the next Governor, and, if possible, a worse than his predecessor. He found he could not keep the expenditure of the colony down to 20,000*l.* a year, though the population was only 15,000; and he resorted to a system of *assignats*.² He issued what he called “debentures” to the amount of 15,000*l.*,—promissory-notes down to the value of 2*s.* Complaining that they became “unduly depreciated,” he made them a legal tender. While thus tampering with the currency of the colony, he had seriously shaken the security of the landed property of the emigrants, by unsettling the terms of their land-purchases from the natives, after the payment had long been made; and, further, he proffered a most untimely and pernicious conciliation and sympathy to a party of the natives who had massacred nine of our coun-

¹ Spectator, 1843, p. 56.

² Hansard, lxxxi. p. 722.

trymen in cold blood, — tomahawking them after they had laid down their arms ; at the same time forbearing to avenge the cutting-down of the British flag at the custom-house. Captain Fitzroy was recalled ; but not before such a catalogue of offences from ignorance, conceit, and ill-humor, had been recorded against him in the debates and committee of Parliament, as makes it a matter of speculation on what principle colonial governors are appointed.¹ After the New-Zealand Company, which was held in universal respect, had expended 300,000*l.* of its own capital, and 300,000*l.* more raised on credit, it had not obtained possession of a single acre of its lands ; emigrants, who had paid cash for their land in England, could not obtain access to it in the colony, from Captain Fitzroy's refusal to fulfil conditionally an agreement between the government and the company, in reliance on which the settlers had made their purchases. The parliamentary committee of inquiry reported, that the settlers had a clear right, as against the crown-lands, to the fulfilment of this agreement ; but they could not get their rights ; and, ruined and forlorn, they were taking ship, as they could get a passage, to New South Wales, or Australia, or back to England, to begin the world again without means. Some of those who remained had their houses pulled down and their crops burned by the natives ; and the Governor did not speak or stir in their behalf, but gave to the aggressors, encouraged by himself, such sympathy as he had. He suppressed the volunteer force raised by the settlers for their own protection, and offered them, in compensation, fifty soldiers to protect a region of 200 miles long, and inhabited by 10,000 persons. The reserves of land made by the company for the natives were left unproductive, and nothing done of what would have been done by the company for their religious improvement and secular instruction ; while the Governor assumed to take their part against the company. Some of the worst acts of Captain Fitzroy were approved by the colonial office, and others were not rebuked ; and it was therefore against the Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, and his office, that the complainants urged their case. "It is, in truth," said Mr. C. Buller, "the history of the war which the colonial office has carried on against the colony of New Zealand. Is this an exaggerated expression ? What enemy of the British name and race could — what civilized enemy would — have brought such ruin on a British colony ? . . . A great colonial wrong is before you ; and, indifferent as in general you naturally are to the fortunes of colonists of whom you see nothing, now that such a matter is brought to your attention, show the colonial office that it is not wholly uncontrolled, and will not always be allowed to sport with the interests of our countrymen in the colonies."

¹ Hansard, lxxxi. pp. 665-726.

Not even such treatment as has been detailed could ruin settlements of such natural advantages as those of New Zealand. Governor Grey, who had already won a high character as successor to Governor Gawler, came from Adelaide to try what could be done in New Zealand. He at once repressed and protected the natives, retrenched the expenditure, vindicated the honor of the British flag, and left the settlers as free as possible, to manage their private affairs, and prosper in their own way. And thus, though the colony may not be all that it might have been long ago,—all that was hoped when the first ship sailed from our shores for the new land, when a crowd of the foremost men in England gave a parting cheer to the anxious but hopeful emigrants, and when some of the emigrants themselves were from among the first men in England,—it is at least a colony of irrepressible and rising fortunes. Its original peculiarity was, that it represented a complete and highly civilized society, a proportion from all ranks, from the kindred of nobles and the bishop down to the hedger and ditcher. Thus is its intellectual and moral welfare secured, as well as its material prosperity. New Zealand is, after all, perhaps the most promising of British colonies.

In Canada, Lord Sydenham was succeeded by Sir Charles Bagot, who opened the second session of the united Canadian Parliament on the 8th of September, 1842. Sir Charles Bagot. He did not find, as Lord Sydenham had anticipated, that every thing was now so settled, that affairs would run in grooves, with only a very gentle force to push them. He was obliged to make an immediate choice between two great difficulties; and a source of disturbance was opened up during his short administration which makes our relations with Canada at this day as doubtful as they have ever been.

Two leaders who had been in opposition in Lord Sydenham's time now found themselves stronger than the government in the Assembly. Mr. Baldwin, the leader of a small Liberal party in what was lately Upper Canada, and Mr. Lafontaine, the leader of the French party in what had been Lower Canada, found a large majority to their hand in the Assembly. The Governor-general must now choose between sanctioning the preponderance of this Radical party, and governing by the support of the minority in the Assembly. It being now the principle of Canadian government to rule in accordance with the majority of the representatives, he did the thing thoroughly, making Baldwin and Lafontaine his ministers. He joined with them a cautious and sensible man from Lord Durham's co-adjutors,—Mr. Daly, whose presence in the Cabinet might be hoped to act as a restraint on any political intemperance. The difficulty which would have

embarrassed the Administration of Sir C. Bagot, if he had remained in his office, related to compensation for losses sustained in the rebellions.¹ A Bill for compensation for losses suffered by loyalists was so altered in the Assembly as to include losses suffered at the hands of the loyalists, — that is, the soldiery, volunteers, and others. Mr. Baldwin proposed and carried this alteration. The sum voted was 40,000*l.*; but no means of raising it were provided. This very important amendment caused little discussion and no apprehension at the time, though it has since appeared too like the running of a mine under the new Canadian constitution which may blow it to pieces. The loyalists of Canada West wanted to have their compensation paid out of the general revenue of the union; but the now-dominant party objected to this, and gave notice that claims on the same fund would be made by sufferers in Canada East. This was so alarming, that the loyalists dropped the subject for the present, and the other party had no wish to revive it, — perceiving, doubtless, how its discussion must renew the conflict of races. Sir Charles Bagot's health presently gave way. Before the end of the year, he was too ill to remain; and he died soon after his return to England.

Sir Charles T. Metcalfe succeeded him, in February, 1843.² The same policy was carried on, and the same Ministry remained in power. The fine qualities of this excellent ruler were known through his government of Jamaica, where he had been sent by Lord Melbourne's Ministry in 1839. For a few months, all appeared to go well; but, in the autumn, disputes arose out of a claim made by his Ministry to be consulted about appointments to office, which all agreed to be the prerogative of the Crown. The Ministry resigned, in consequence of the refusal of Sir C. Metcalfe to admit their right to be consulted; and the session closed hastily, before its business was finished. For some time there was no Ministry; and, when there was, it was a moderate "English" Ministry, — Mr. Daly and Mr. Draper being the leading representatives in it of the two sections of country. The French party were now in opposition for nearly four years; and now, therefore, was the time for settling the affair of the 40,000*l.* The Governor-general and his Cabinet admitted the justice of giving compensation to sufferers of both parties; but the doing it was difficult in the extreme. Instead of charging the money for Canada West on the general revenue, they appropriated to the purpose two local funds which were paid almost entirely by the English in the Western province. So far, all went well. The trouble was with the other province. A commissioner was appointed to manage the busi-

¹ Spectator, 1849, p. 297.² Annual Register, 1843, p. 337.

ness, with regard to Canada East,—to manage it, everybody thought; but it soon appeared that they had power only to receive claims, and not to decide upon them. The commissioners applied to the Executive to know how they were to distinguish between claims from rebels, and those proffered by persons not actually involved in the rebellion. The answer was, that none were to be excluded but those who had been convicted by law; and when one of the leaders, exiled to Bermuda under Lord Durham's ordinance, applied personally to the Governor-general to know what he ought to do, the Governor-general desired him to send in his account, reminding him with a smile that he had not been convicted by law, the ordinance under which he was sent to Bermuda being declared illegal.¹ Still no disturbance arose. But Sir Charles Metcalfe (now made Lord Metcalfe) fell ill, and after fearful sufferings, nobly borne for many months, was compelled to relinquish his government; and he returned to England at the close of 1845, not with the slightest hope of relief, but to make way for a successor adequate to the public service. Honors were showered on him on his return; and, in the midst of the anguish of disease, such a heart as his must have enjoyed the demonstrations of sympathy and respect which met him everywhere. But, as he said in one of his last replies to addresses, the grave was open at his feet; and he sank into it in Death of Lord Metcalfe. the next September, mourned by all parties in Canada, and by the whole political world at home. Lord Cathcart administered the government for nearly a year, till Lord Elgin went out as Governor-general, a few months after the date which closes our history.²

The Lafontaine Ministry was restored,—the “Daly-Draper Cabinet” having fallen into a minority in the Assembly, and made matters worse by an experiment of a general election. The restored Ministry proceeded in the compensation matter, bringing into the Assembly a Bill by which compensation was to be given to all who were not formally convicted of high treason; and the charge would fall on the general revenues of Canada. Now, by far the larger part of the taxes is paid by others than the French; the French making for themselves the greater number of the commodities which others import,—such as sugar, tobacco, and material for clothing.³ Thus the British party see that taxes paid by themselves, and not by the party claiming compensation, will go to build up the fortunes of those whom they call rebels. Unhappily, there is a wide diversity of opinion as to whether this is an imperial or a local question. Some say that it is an imperial question, because it is of the same bearing

¹ Masson's Letter to the Minerve, March, 1849.

² Annual Register, 1846, Chron. 282.

³ Spectator, 1849, p. 298.

as a question of amnesty after rebellion. Others look at it as a local quarrel about a matter of finance and party ascendancy. It does not lie within our bounds to discuss this controversy. It is scarcely necessary even to say that it has kindled a war of opinions in Canada, which seems but too likely to revive the war of races, and endanger the permanence of the policy cemented with the hearts' blood of a succession of devoted rulers.

In 1845, misfortunes befell the city of Quebec, by which it was reduced to nearly the size that it was when Wolfe ^{Fires at Quebec.} fell before it.¹ More than two-thirds of the city were destroyed by fire in the months of May and June. These large fires seldom leave much cause for regret to a subsequent century; as it is usually the primitive, ill-built, unwholesome part of a great city which is devoured by the flames. In this case, it was the wooden part of Quebec that was destroyed,—the narrow streets between the river and the rock, where was found most that was foul and disreputable. Much else went also,—churches, wharves, ship-yards, and a hospital full of sick persons, many of whom perished in the flames; and the immediate distress amidst the enormous destruction of property, and crowding of houseless thousands, was very terrible, and, when the fire of June drove them forth a second time, almost overwhelming. But the Quebec of a century hence will be all the better for the accident. Generous help was sent from far and near; and the citizens have probably already learned to look back without much regret to the great fires of 1845.

There seems to have been a fatality about fires during this period. Just a year after the second Quebec fire, ^{At St. Johns.} the city of St. John's, Newfoundland, was almost destroyed.² Scarcely a fourth part remained. The houses here were built of wood; and the stores in the warehouses were chiefly oil and blubber, and other combustible substances. A complete sweep seems to have been made of the churches, and the government and other public offices. During the summer months, the greater part of the inhabitants were living in tents, provided from the army stores.

In 1842, there had been such a fire at Hamburg, that the people thought the day of judgment was come.³ ^{At Hamburg.} Churches were falling like ricks in the flame. Carts were on fire in the squares, and boats on the river. Terrified horses strove to plunge into the Alster. Amidst blinding showers of ashes, those who were driven beyond their wits sank on their knees, screaming, weeping, and praying; and hardy thieves pilaged the houses that stood open. Two thousand houses were

¹ Annual Register, 1845, pp. 346-348. ² Annual Register, 1846, Chron. 85.

³ Annual Register, 1842, Chron. 84.

destroyed; 30,000 persons were left homeless; and the loss of property was computed at 7,000,000%. Liberal aid was sent from this country, as from others. The greater part of Smyrna was burnt down in July, 1845,—4000 houses and many public buildings being destroyed.¹ In Cuba, the richest part of the rich city of Matanzas perished in like manner; and again, in the same month, July, 1845,—bringing five of the greatest fires of modern times within the compass of two months,—occurred the last fearful New-York conflagration, in which 302 dwellings were destroyed, and above 2,000,000% of property.² It seems impossible that some lessons should not be derived by the world from such spectacles as these, as to the construction of dwellings, if not as to the guardianship of such a power as fire. Meantime, it is as well to admit the purification that it brings, through however hard an experience.

¹ Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 97, 98. ² Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 103.

CHAPTER XIV.

At the opening of the session of 1845, there seemed to be but one troublesome controversy agitating the community. The harvest of 1844 had been good; and therefore provisions were moderate in price, trade was brisk, the operative classes were contented, the revenue was steadily rising, and even Ireland was quieter than usual. The one troublesome controversy was — as need hardly be said — about the corn-laws.

The “landed interest” was restless and uneasy. The League was as busy as ever, and visibly growing more powerful in this season of prosperity, though it had been The corn question. widely said that its influence had been wholly due to the distress of 1840–43. It was also evident, though the truth was admitted with the utmost reluctance, that Sir R. Peel was rising yearly in the favor of the manufacturing and commercial classes, by whom he was regarded as so decided a free-trader, that every thing might be hoped from him, as time opened to him opportunities for carrying out his principles in regard to other food than meat and fish and garden vegetables. Few, perhaps, put this anticipation into words; but there were many land-owners and many farmers who let it lie in their minds, to be revolved in solitary rides and walks, and compared with what they heard among their neighbors; and there were a multitude of commercial men, who, practised in discerning the course of commercial events, and of politics in connection with them, foresaw that the first pressure upon the food-market must occasion a repeal of the corn-laws, and that Sir R. Peel was more likely to effect the change than any other man, because he knew and had done most about free-trade, and because he was the only man we had who could govern under difficulties. The Whigs were pledged to a fixed duty, which the free-traders were resolved not to accept. Sir R. Peel and his government were pledged to nothing but to do what events might require. They had stood by their sliding-scale for two years, because, as they declared, they saw no reason for repealing it till it had had a full trial; but they had not said that it would prove equal to any trial, — much less had they refused to withdraw it if it should be found to fail. It is a proof of the

power of educational and class prejudice that they and the Whigs could so long cling to the proved mischief of agricultural protection; but the minds of the Peel Ministry were now avowedly open to evidence as to whether all agricultural protection was more of an evil than a good, and whether, if an evil, it was a removable one. On this ground alone, the Ministry was regarded as in any way unstable, at the commencement of the session of 1845. On this, the manufacturing and commercial classes were watchful, while the agricultural interest was suspicious. About every thing else, everybody was better satisfied than usual, except the late Whig ministers, and some of their adherents.

It must now be decided whether the income-tax should be removed or continued. The royal speech, on the 4th of February, showed that the government desired its continuance.¹ Other objects indicated in the speech were the establishment of the new Irish colleges, and a sanitary system, in pursuance of the report of the sanitary commission, which had just published the results of its inquiries. The proposals about the Irish colleges deprived the ministers of the companionship of Mr. Gladstone, who conceived himself to be deprived of liberty to proceed by certain opinions which he had published before he came into office, concerning the relations between a Christian Church and State.² Mr. Gladstone carefully explained that he had no thought of casting censure on his colleagues, or of deciding what ought to be done under the peculiar circumstances of any society. He acted with a view to the preservation of his own consistency, after having addressed the world in a published treatise. This explanation extinguished the reports which were prevalent of critical and dangerous measures to be proposed by the Ministry, which had so alarmed Mr. Gladstone as to cause his retirement. Everybody was sorry to lose him; and the general impression seemed to be that he was more scrupulous than was necessary. But recent experience of Whig tenacity of office had disposed men to value even an undue delicacy.

According to Sir R. Peel's new and advantageous plan of bringing forward the financial statement at the earliest possible time, the discussion on the income-tax was entered upon on the 14th of February. Much had been expected from the Premier on the occasion; but his speech surpassed anticipation, — being indeed one of the finest of his many fine financial expositions.³ He was in excellent spirits; and with good reason. The improvement in the revenue was such that a surplus of 5,000,000*l.* at the least would be found in the ex-

¹ Hansard, lxxvii. p. 1.

² Hansard, lxxvii. p. 78.

³ Hansard, lxxvii. pp. 455–497.

chequer in the next April. But our rapidly extending commerce required increased naval guardianship; and he intended to propose an increased naval expenditure of 1,000,000*l*. There were to be new naval stations in the Chinese seas, in the Pacific, and on the coast of Africa. If the income-tax were abolished, there might be no deficiency the next year; but there would the year after. To the Minister it appeared wiser to continue the income-tax, and use the opportunity of the surplus to reduce more customs-duties. First, he took the sugar-duties. He proposed to reduce the duty on unrefined sugar from the West Indies and the Mauritius from 25*s*. 3*d*. to 14*s*., and that on East India to 18*s*. 8*d*., in order to preserve the existing proportions. The protective duty on foreign free-labor sugar was to be reduced to 9*s*. 4*d*., so that duty on such foreign sugar would now be 23*s*. 2*d*. The partially refined sugars of British production were reduced from 25*s*. 3*d*. to 16*s*. 4*d*.; that from India to 21*s*. 9*d*.; and that on free-labor foreign to 28*s*. Thus, while the protecting duty on unrefined sugar was lowered to 9*s*. 4*d*., that on partially refined was increased by 11*s*. 4*d*. The prohibitory duty on refined sugar was exchanged, as regarded British produce, for one of 18*s*. 8*d*. on refined, and 21*s*. on double-refined sugar. It was expected that these changes would reduce the price of sugar to the consumer at least 1½*d*. per pound, more probably 1½*d*. The loss to the revenue in the first year was calculated at 1,300,000*l*. Next, all the export-duties which remained on the list were to be abolished. Among these was that on coal; and the Minister declared his expectation that the coal-owners would give to the consumer the benefit of the release, and that no more would be heard of combinations to restrict the supply of coal, and to enhance its price. The loss from the abolition of the coal-duty was estimated at 120,000*l*. Next, it was proposed to abolish the duties on 430 out of 813 articles of raw material of manufactures; a change which would extinguish the troublesome and burdensome warehousing system. This would release the raw material of silk, hemp, and flax; certain yarns; furniture woods; animal and vegetable manures; and a great number of ores, drugs, and dye-stuffs. Staves for coopers' work were another exempted article, on which alone the loss to the treasury would be 30,000*l*. The loss on the 430 articles was estimated at 320,000*l*.; a sum well worth supplying in another way, in consideration of such a disburdening of manufactures as was proposed. A more important article of raw material than any of these was cotton-wool. Though it yielded a revenue more than double the whole 430, — namely, 680,000*l*., — the Minister proposed to sweep away the duty altogether. So much for the customs-duties. As for the

excise, the auction-duty was to be abolished, and some alteration to be made in auctioneers' licenses. The glass-duty ^{Excise-duties.} had amounted to 200 and even 300 per cent on its manufacture. It was now to be remitted. The exciseman was now no longer to intrude his mischievous and vexatious presence in glass-houses; and the people might enjoy the envied privilege of some other countries in having various articles of domestic convenience made of the cleanly and beautiful material of glass. But there would be something better than the comfort of having milk-pans, handles of doors and drawers, lamps, and candlesticks, &c., of glass; something better than rivalling the splendid Bohemian glass to be found in our drawing-rooms; something better than the spread of plate-glass windows: Sir R. Peel explained to the House, that the balance-spring of a chronometer he held in his hand, made of glass, was more to be relied on amidst extreme changes of temperature than one of metal; and thus the purposes of science would be promoted, as they must be by the removal of every impediment in the way of the improvement of lenses, and the perfecting of lighthouses, and of optical instruments of every kind. In the opinion of the sanitary commissioners, and of all who knew most of the state of Ireland, the removal of the glass-duty was likely to prove of more advantage to the health and comfort of the poor than even the repeal of the window-duty. This important article, charged with duty two or three times exceeding its natural cost, had yielded 642,000*l.*, — a sum little worth the social mischief of the tax. The total loss by these reductions would be about 3,338,000*l.*; nearly amounting to the estimated surplus of April twelvemonths, — supposing the naval expenditure to be increased as proposed. This was without reckoning the decrease in the public establishments which would follow upon so vast a reduction of taxation. The experiment would be called a bold one, and so it was; but the results of the former great experiment of the same kind were very encouraging. The income-tax had not caused any visible reduction in other branches of revenue; while the losses in the customs branch were in course of being rapidly filled up. The term for which the continuance of the income-tax was proposed was, again, three years. As no one could foresee the approaching potato rot, there was every reason to anticipate, that, in April, 1848, the tax might be removed; and this was the hope held out by the Minister.

The most obvious thing about this scheme was, that there was no popularity-seeking in it. There had been no agitation against the taxes now repealed, while there could be no doubt of the delight of the nation if the income-tax had been abolished. With such a surplus, a less far-sighted Minister would have abolished

it. Sir R. Peel, instead of giving this immediate delight, preferred using the opportunity of prosperity to strengthen and deepen the foundations of our industrial and commercial welfare. The obvious greatness of this policy secured respect for his scheme, even from those who most opposed particular portions of it.

When the discussion came on, on the 17th, it appeared that many members entertained objections to one or another portion of the scheme; but the continuance of the income-tax was — to the great satisfaction of the country at large, who by this time understood their own interest in its continuance till free-trade should be fully obtained — voted by a majority of 208 in a House of 318.¹ The strongest opposition, because the best grounded in principle, was against the sugar-duties; Mr. Milner Gibson moving a resolution against differential duties. But ministers were too strong to be effectually opposed on any part of their measure; and their Bills became law on the 8th of May.²

At the close of the session, it appeared to observers as if scarcely any thing but the corn-laws had been talked of, when once the business of the budget had been settled. Whatever subject was introduced, that of the corn-laws presently appeared, and swallowed it up. The farmer's friends were complaining that wheat was at 45s. in spite of the new sliding-scale; and the farmer's other kind of friends, the free-traders, were complaining on his behalf that he could not make his land answer, on account of legal restriction under the name of protection. The new manure, called guano, was brought, at vast expense, from a distance of almost half the world, when the farmer might obtain a far better manure, and more of it, on his land, if he might only import provender for a sufficient proportion of stock. The land was not half cultivated; and the peasantry were consequently insufficiently employed, and the laboring-classes insufficiently fed. Other speakers had compassion for the landlords; and others again for the laborers. From whatever point the question was looked at, it was clear that all the three classes who, however opposed in reality, were included together under the designation of "the agricultural interest," were in a low and discontented state; and, while it was so, the question of the corn-laws must of necessity be always coming uppermost. Mr. Cobden moved for a committee of inquiry into the existing agricultural distress and its causes, and got out what he wanted to say before he was defeated by a majority of 92 in a House of 334.³ The answer of the government, by the mouth

¹ Hansard, lxxvii. p. 634.

² Hansard, lxxx. p. 277.

³ Hansard, lxxviii. p. 881.

of Mr. Sidney Herbert, was, that such committees were never of any use; that knowledge enough had been obtained already; and that the sensitive agricultural interest would be alarmed, and suppose that government contemplated the withdrawal of their protection. Whatever he said in evidence of the improving condition of agriculture was overthrown by the counter-statements of Conservatives as well as free-traders, who brought proof, from the votes of agricultural bodies in various parts of England, that the distress was not light and partial, but general and very severe. There were a few unguarded words, however, in Mr. Herbert's speech which did more good to the free-trade

cause than all the feeble things he said, — not in favor of the principle of protection, for he said nothing of

Portents. the sort, — but against immediate change. Mr. Sidney Herbert was a young man, and ardent, as young men in or out of the government usually are, in political discussion. His ardor found little scope in a negative and halting speech like that which he had to make in reply to Mr. Cobden; and it broke out in a sentence, one of whose phrases was never again dropped while the controversy lasted: "He must add further, as the representative of an agricultural constituency, that it would be distasteful to the agriculturists to come whining to Parliament at every period of temporary distress; nor would they do so. Parliament have accorded to the agriculturists a certain amount of reduced protection.¹ With that they are content; and, in adverse circumstances, such as failure of crop and the like, they would meet them manfully, and put their shoulders to the wheel. . . . He was of opinion that they could not do better than to follow the excellent advice . . . to expend capital on their farms and in improvements of the land, and so by their own efforts restore prosperity. The government had no wish to maintain a high monopoly without alteration, as it had proved; nor had it made any promises to the agriculturists of certain prices in corn, which they knew that no law could give." Such language as this from a representative of an agricultural constituency was received with dismay by the farmers all over England. They complained of the mockery of exhorting them to put capital into their land when their capital was all gone; they were shocked at the avowal that prices could not be regulated by law; they were assured at last, in the roughest way, that they were to have no more aid from the government; but the insufferable insult was the phrase about coming "whining" for protection. The free-traders thanked the young statesman for that word; and they made good use of it as long as it was wanted. From that night, too, they looked upon him, and therefore upon his colleagues, as

¹ Hansard, lxxviii. p. 818.

their own. Whatever Mr. Herbert and his colleagues might themselves think of their position and prospects, it was clear to the free-traders everywhere, that they wanted only a little more enlightenment — a little further disentanglement from the prejudices of a life — to join heartily in sweeping away the mischief of protection to agriculture. There was now no difference of principle between the Ministry and the free-traders. It had become a mere question of prudence. In a narrow sense, it was called a question of good faith; but those who most strongly insisted that all actual pledges must be kept, perceived that the time must be near when conviction of the truth on the part of the farmers themselves must bring on an absolution on every hand.

A few nights after the vote on Mr. Cobden's motion, the cause of the free-traders was well pleaded by an antagonist. Mr. Miles moved that the surplus revenue of the time should be applied to the relief of the agricultural interest; and he made bitter complaints of the last sliding-scale as wholly ineffectual for the relief of the farmers.¹ His speech was one long complaint of the plenty that overspread the land, — the abundance of corn and the cheapness of meat. He laid himself open to the admonitory reply that it was impossible to set about making food scarce and dear; and that the proper course evidently was for the farmers to study how to produce the requisite abundance at home by improved cultivation, without which it must assuredly be obtained from abroad. As Sir James Graham observed, — premising that he considered protection to agriculture just and necessary, — Mr. Miles's statements required rather a repeal of the corn-laws, and of what remained of the tariff, than so small a measure as he proposed; but Sir James Graham did not admit the facts with regard to the severity and prevalence of agricultural distress.² Before the debate closed, some words were uttered by an enemy of the government, which, read after the event, prove what expectations were abroad. The rancor and levity of Mr. Disraeli's speeches prevent their being relied on for accuracy of statement; but, like all other speeches, they make unconscious revelations of fact which are valuable in the retrospect. On this occasion, while the tone of insult goes for nothing, the prophecy is a fact of some weight. After saying that Sir R. Peel "sends down his valet, who says in the genteel manner, 'We can have no whining here,'" Mr. Disraeli proceeded: "Protection appears to be in about the same condition that Protestantism was in 1828."³ The country will draw its moral. For my part, if we are to have free-trade, I, who honor

¹ Hansard, lxxviii. p. 963.

² Hansard, lxxviii. p. 985.

³ Hansard, lxxviii. p. 1028.

genius, prefer that such measures should be proposed by the honorable member for Stockport [Mr. Cobden], than by one who, through skilful parliamentary manœuvres, has tampered with the generous confidence of a great people and of a great party. For myself, I care not what may be the result. Dissolve, if you please, the Parliament you have betrayed, and appeal to the people, who, I believe, mistrust you. For me there remains this, at least,—the opportunity of expressing thus publicly my belief that a Conservative government is an organized hypocrisy.”

Mr. Miles's motion being negatived, two more debates on the great subject remained. On the 3d of June, Mr. Ward moved for a committee of inquiry on the burdens and exemptions of the landed interest; and, on the 10th, Mr. Villiers brought forward his annual motion on the corn-laws. On Mr. Ward's motion, the Protectionists' majority was 182 to 109; and on Mr. Villiers's, 254 to 122.¹ These debates showed a marked advance in the question. Sir James Graham repeated with increased emphasis his conviction that the prosperity of the landed interest was dependent on that of other classes; and that a gradual repeal of protection would prove to be necessary for agriculture, as for every other interest.² He only protested against suddenness. Another significant fact was, that Lord J. Russell, in bringing forward a set of resolutions on the condition of the laboring-classes, declared that he could not now recommend the fixed duty of 8s. which he had proposed in 1841. He supposed no one would propose a smaller duty than 4s.; and he, if it was his affair, should propose one of 4s., 5s., or 6s. The cause was now felt to be won. It was universally understood that Lord J. Russell never went before public opinion, and that he rarely, if ever, knew the extent and bearing of public opinion. If he, then, admitted that four years had authorized him to reduce his fixed duty one-half,—for he invited pressure to make it 4s.,—it became almost a calculable matter how soon the Whig leader would admit that the other half of his fixed duty was indefensible. And the amusing looseness of his terms of proposal—the offered choice of 4s., 5s., or 6s.—gave the strongest impression of a temporary playing with the subject, in preparation for working it seriously. From this night, it was taken for granted everywhere, that the Whig leaders were in competition with the existing Ministry for the repeal of the corn-laws; and even the question of time was brought within a narrow compass.

The royal speech on the prorogation of Parliament, on the 9th of August, was the last thoroughly cheerful speech which the nation was to enjoy for some time. In the account given to Her Majesty, through the speaker, of the work of the session, we

¹ Hansard, lxxx. p. 1423.

² Hansard, lxxx. p. 879.

find that, besides the business already noted,—Irish education, British railways, and fiscal improvements,—the Parliament had amended the law of Scotland in regard to the relief of the poor, promoted the drainage of land and enclosure of commons, and extended the provisions of the Bank Act of last year, with some modifications, to the banks of Scotland and Ireland. The prevailing impression of those who watched the course of parliamentary affairs was, that the disintegration of parties was proceeding more and more rapidly, as the commercial element rose above the agricultural; and that from this change there could be no rest or pause till the agricultural interest had obtained that freedom, and consequent stimulus and intelligence, which had caused the expansion of interests that were erroneously considered to be antagonistic.

Meantime, it had begun to rain. It began to rain, after a cold and late spring, at the beginning of the summer; and it seemed as if it was never going to leave off again. ^{Bad weather.}

In some parts of the country, the sun was scarcely seen from the month of May till the next spring. Those who first marked the perseverance of the soft-falling rain thought of the budding and blossoming promised in Scripture, where the snow and rain are shown forth as illustrations of the fertilizing influences of Providence; and, thus far, there was nothing but hope of good. Then, as the fall went on, with less softness, and more chill, and fewer intermissions, men began to fear for the harvest, and to calculate that much dry foreign wheat would be necessary to mix with our own damp and unripened grain. Then arose the fear that our own inferior grain would not keep, so thoroughly ready for sprouting would some of it appear to be; and, in the midst of this, it became clear that throughout Europe, with a few local exceptions, the harvest would prove a deficient one; so that, unless there was unusual abundance in America, the prospect was a fearful one. Still, the most sagacious and the most timid were far from conceiving what the rain was doing by its persevering continual soaking into the ground. First, a market-gardener here and there, a farmer, an Irish cottier, saw a brown spot ^{Potato rot.} appear on the margin of the leaf of the potato, and

did not remember ever to have seen such a thing before. The brown spot grew black, and spread, and covered the stalk, till a whole potato-field looked as if a scorching wind had passed over it. Yet, perhaps, the roots might appear to be in a good state; and one man would let the plants alone, while another would mow off the tops, and wait to see what happened. The stealthy rain had, by some means yet as mysterious as ever, generated some minute plague,—of what nature nobody yet knows, if indeed it is certain that the rain was the instrument,—a plague so

minute that no microscope has yet convicted it, yet so powerful that it was soon to overthrow governments, and derange commerce, and affect for all time to come the political fate of England, and settle the question of the regeneration or the destruction of Ireland. The minute plague spread and spread, till it blackened thousands of acres, and destroyed the food of millions of men. In some wholesome regions, the last to be affected, the inhabitants would hardly believe what they heard and read. The newspapers were exaggerating shamefully for some political object; the League was trading on the rain, and frightening the public; private correspondents were credulous, and too fond of excitement; their own potatoes, and most of their neighbors', looked very well; and the clergy were again ready with rebuke of anxiety and doubt, saying that there had always been talk of bad weather, but that, somehow or other, there was always a harvest. When, in such a favored region, two or three benevolent gentry stored up their own sound potatoes for the use of the sick and the aged in case of need, and laid in rice and macaroni and other substitutes for winter use at their own tables, their neighbors for a time laughed at the precaution, and said that potatoes were abundant and excessively cheap in the markets. But soon the change appeared even in these healthiest districts. A man might exhibit his green and flourishing crop to a stranger, and say that he should take it up on Monday: on that night would come a thunder-storm; and the next morning, if the owner stirred the soil of his blackened field with a pitchfork, up came such a steaming stench as showed him that his field was turned putrid. And then it became known why potatoes were abundant and cheap in the markets. Everybody was eager to sell before his potatoes had time to rot. What was to become of the poor Irish if this went on, was now the most anxious question of the time.

As for the League, it was busy enough during the rain, but not more than it had been before. The League. The Agricultural Protection Society, which had risen up in opposition to it, declared, in the preceding December, that the League had ceased its missionary efforts, and become a mere registration-club, while it had itself circulated 30,000 copies of an address in favor of protection. The League registration went on quite as diligently as was alleged: but, in another month,—January, 1845,—it appeared that 150 meetings in parliamentary boroughs, and fifty elsewhere, had been held in little more than two years; that 15,000 copies of the "League" newspaper were weekly distributed; and that 2,000,000 copies of other publications had been sent abroad.¹ Of letters, 30,000 had been

¹ Companion to the Almanac, 1846, p. 254.

received during the year, and 300,000 sent out. The next May showed that the League was something more than a registration-club. Covent-Garden Theatre was fitted up with great skill and taste for a bazaar; and the show was something quite unlike any thing ever seen before in our country. In the great Gothic hall into which the theatre was transformed, there was a display of manufactures — freely presented in aid of the League Fund — which sold for 25,000*l.*, besides leaving a sufficient quantity to make another large bazaar at Manchester.¹ It was open from the 5th to the 29th of May; and 125,000 persons paid for admission within that time. Four hundred ladies conducted the sales; and, generally speaking, each contributing town had a stall, with its name, and sometimes its civic arms, painted above. The porcelain and cutlery exhibitions, the mirrors and grindstones, the dolls and the wheat-sacks, shoes and statuettes, antiquities and the last fashion of colored muslins, flannels and plated goods, and anatomical preparations, laces, and books, made a curious and wonderful display, which was thought to produce more effect on some parliamentary minds than all the eloquence yet uttered in the Commons. Yet, after all this, the League had greater things to do. We find it decreeing the levy of 250,000*l.* for the promotion of free-trade; and, in December, there was a meeting at Manchester, at which one member subscribed 1500*l.*; twenty-two subscribed 1000*l.* each; one, 700*l.*; and eighteen, 500*l.*² The enthusiasm had risen as the crisis drew on; and the sum of 62,000*l.* was presently obtained within the room, while the zeal elsewhere was such that there was no doubt of the realization of the whole quarter of a million, if it should be wanted. And all this was after 122,508*l.* had been raised by previous subscriptions.

By this time, however, there were many who doubted whether either money or effort would be required much longer. More por- tents. The rain having gone on, people began inquiring in September whether the ports were to be opened; and, next, whether we could be sure of supplies, at short notice and in a prevalent bad season, if the ports were opened to-morrow. Then some people, who had before talked without thinking, began to see how dangerous such precariousness was, and how much more secure against famine we should be if foreign countries should raise corn for us every year, instead of being called upon to supply us out of their own stock, or from an accidental surplus. On the 10th of October, Lord Ashley addressed a letter to the electors of Dorsetshire, which was eagerly read all over the kingdom. He declared his conviction that the destiny of the corn-laws was fixed, and that “the leading men of the great parties in the

¹ Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 67. ² Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 193.

Legislature are by no means disinclined to their eventual abolition." In the beginning of November, Cabinet councils were frequent, and rumors were abroad that extensive inquiries had been for some time making by the Minister about the results of the harvest. Rumor spoke also of disagreements in the Cabinet; but these were supposed to relate merely to the question of opening the ports. At this time, Lord Morpeth, a late Whig Minister, joined the League, and sent a letter with his contribution, in which he declared: "I wish to record, in the most emphatic way I can, my conviction that the time is come for a total repeal of the corn-laws, and my protest against the continued inaction of the State in the present emergency."¹ Lord Morpeth declared that he wrote this letter "without concert or consultation with any one else;" and events proved that he wrote it without any more insight than people in general had into what "the State"—that is, the Cabinet—was about.

Lord John
Russell's
letter.

Lord John Russell presently showed himself determined not to share the "inaction of the State." He addressed to the electors of London a letter from Edinburgh, dated November 22, 1845, which he declared to be occasioned by the separating of the ministers without apparent result, after their frequent Cabinet meetings.² After confessing his changes of opinion during the last twenty years, and relating the stages of his advocacy of a continually lessening amount of fixed duty, Lord J. Russell declared: "It is no longer worth while to contend for a fixed duty. . . . The struggle to make bread scarce and dear, when it is clear that part, at least, of the additional price goes to increase rent, is a struggle deeply injurious to an aristocracy which, this quarrel once removed, is strong in property, strong in the construction of our Legislature, strong in opinion, strong in ancient associations and the memory of immortal services. Let us then unite to put an end to a system which has proved to be the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter divisions among classes, the cause of penury, fever, mortality, and crime among the people." This invitation was valuable as a preparation for the deed to be done by other hands. But it was too late as regarded Lord J. Russell himself. It met with no hearty response. His position would now have been a glorious one, if he had ever before advocated perfect freedom of the corn-trade; and he would have been trusted if he had been a Conservative leader, like his rival,—a Conservative leader convinced and converted by the stringency of circumstances: but, as an avowed leader of a Liberal party, converted only at the moment when he should have been attaining the aim of many years,—at the moment when his Conservative rival was under-

¹ Spectator, 1845, p. 1152.

² Spectator, 1845, p. 1134.

going the agony of conversion, — he was not trusted; and it was impossible that he should be. This letter, on which he clearly founded great hopes, did him no good; the Conservative convert was appointed to the work. When the time came for explanations in Parliament, Lord J. Russell made complaints of his letter being regarded as a party move, — as a bid for office; but there was one feature in the letter which deprived him of all right to resent such an interpretation: it abounded in taunts and expressions of spleen towards Sir R. Peel. The whole composition has the air of being aimed at the Minister.

It is known by means of ministerial explanations afterwards, what took place during this period when all the world was on the watch, and no one could learn any thing. The Cabinet councils held between the 1st and the 6th of November were ^{Cabinet} for the purpose of considering the information sent in ^{councils.} from Ireland about the potato crop, and from the whole kingdom about the general crop.¹ As regarded Ireland, the reports were alarming beyond description. The ministers could deliberate upon them without disturbance from without; for as yet there was no agitation about opening the ports which could affect the action of the government, — no petitions, no urgency from public meetings or in the newspapers. The desire of Sir R. Peel at that time was to throw open the ports by an order in Council, or by calling Parliament together immediately for the purpose: but only three of his colleagues agreed with him; and the ministers separated, on the understanding that they should re-assemble at the call of the Premier. His hope was that the growing alarm would presently convince all his colleagues of the necessity of opening the ports. Commissions were organized for the prevention of a sudden pressure of extreme distress, especially in Ireland; and, on the 25th of November, the ministers again met, to prepare instructions for these commissions. The instructions were agreed on; but then it appeared to the Premier that these instructions were inconsistent with the maintenance of the corn-laws in their existing state. He reserved to himself the power of insuring a free supply from abroad; and now his colleagues had become so impressed by the daily increasing alarm as to afford a hope that they would withdraw the opposition with which they before met the proposal. But Lord Stanley could not yield; nor could one or two others. If the opening of the ports had taken place at the beginning of November, it would have been done with a strong hand: but the delay had admitted of the appearance of Lord J. Russell's letter; and now, if the Cabinet was not absolutely united, — if a single resignation took place, — it would appear as if the letter of a rival had determined

¹ Hansard, lxxxiii. p. 86.

the Minister's views, and his acts would have lost all their moral weight.

It was in the midst of the second series of consultations, that an incident occurred which startled the whole kingdom, and gave the newspapers plenty to say. On the 4th of December, the "Times" announced that it was the intention of the government to repeal the corn-laws, and to call Parliament together in January for the purpose. Some ministerial papers doubted, and then indignantly denied this. Some journals said that it could not be known to the "Times," because the fact could transpire only through breach of the Cabinet oath. Others said that it might fairly be a matter of inference from the general policy being understood: but to this there was the objection, that the "Times" asserted that its news was not a matter of inference, but of fact; and the ordinary government papers persevered in denying the truth of the news altogether. The "Times" was scolded, insulted, jeered at, lectured; and everybody was warned not to mind the "Times:" but everybody did mind it; and the "Times" persevered, day after day, week after week, in haughtily asserting that its intelligence would be found correct within an assigned period. Meantime, the general conviction was complete, that the "Times" had some peculiar means of information. One report was, that the Duke of Wellington had come down to the Horse Guards in great wrath, swearing, as he threw himself from his horse, at the pass things had come to when the corn-laws were to be given up; but, besides that such a freak was not very like the shrewd and loyal Duke of Wellington, there was no reason here why the "Times" should be exclusively in possession of the information. There are some, of course, who know, and many more who believe they know, how the thing happened; but it is not fitting to record in a permanent form the chit-chat of London about any but the historical bearings of an incident like this. The "Times" had true information, and that is all that is important to the narrative. As we have said, the announcement was made on the 4th of December. On the 5th, the "Standard" exhibited a conspicuous title to a counter-statement, "Atrocious Fabrication by the 'Times';" but, meanwhile, "the effect of the announcement by the 'Times' at the Corn Exchange was immense surprise, not so much displeasure as might have been expected, and an instant downward tendency in the price of grain." So said other papers. "We adhere to our original announcement," said the "Times" of December 6, "that Parliament will meet early in January, and that a repeal of the corn-laws will be proposed in one House by Sir R. Peel, and in the other by the Duke of Wellington." The free-traders so far

Announce-
ment of the
"Times."

gave weight to the assertion as to announce everywhere with diligence, that they would accept of "nothing short of total repeal, — not a shilling, nor a farthing, of duty should be imposed without sound reason shown."

For a few days after this, the League was at the height of its glory. The agriculturists were cowed, and could only groan and murmur: men were out all day in the streets, to learn the opinions of their neighbors, and, above all, the expectations of Leaguers. On Sunday the 7th, it was understood that the Duke of Wellington had certainly, though most reluctantly, yielded. On Monday, it was observed that he did not attend the council; on Tuesday, it was believed that he would not act with his colleagues on this subject, and, by refusing to do so, had virtually withdrawn his assent. On Wednesday, there was a privy-council; on Thursday morning, it was understood that the meeting of Parliament was somewhat deferred, as if to gain time to settle some difficulty. Throughout the day, the rumors of ^{Resignation} of ministers. dissensions in the Cabinet grew stronger; and at night it was made known, all over London, that the Ministry had resigned.

It may truly be said, that the intelligence was received throughout the country with dismay. The full value of Sir R. Peel was not yet known, — the value of his moral earnestness when at last freed from the shackles of educational prejudice and party intimacies; but the value of his administration was everywhere felt. For above four years now, the nation had reposed upon his wise government, reposed on his safe and skilful financial management, and thorough efficiency in all the business of governing; and he and his colleagues had moreover carried us through a period of deep depression and fearful disorder; replenished the sources of our manufactures and commerce; re-instated our finances; given benefits to Ireland; sanctioned the principle and practice of religious liberty; and strengthened and settled the whole fabric of our polity, as far as the vigorous and skilful administration of the national affairs for nearly five years could do so. And now, just when the most important of all existing questions had to be conducted to an issue, he was to step aside for those who had no more right than he, on any ground, to the management of the business, and far less power of every kind. The regret was but temporary, however; for the Peel Ministry was presently restored.¹

Sir R. Peel thought it due to the magnitude of the interest at stake to try no experiment which might fail. When assured, therefore, of the dissent of his colleagues, he immediately resigned. Lord Stanley and the other dissentients would not

¹ Hansard, lxxxiii. p. 89.

undertake to form a government; and the Queen, of her own choice, sent for Lord J. Russell. Lord J. Russell was at Edinburgh. The royal summons reached him at night on the 8th of December. As there was then no railway to London, it was the 10th before he arrived in town, and the 11th before he appeared in the Queen's presence at Osborne, in the Isle of Wight.¹ He had made up his mind, that, if asked to undertake the formation of a Ministry, he must decline, because his party were in a minority in the Commons of from 90 to 100. This was his answer when the Queen made the expected request; but Sir R. Peel had left with the Queen a paper, in which, after declaring the reasons of his resignation, he avowed his readiness, "in his private capacity, to aid and give every support to the new Minister whom Her Majesty might select to effect a settlement of the question of the corn-laws." This wholly changed the state and prospect of the case. Lord J. Russell returned to London to consult such of his friends as were within reach. Through Sir J. Graham, Lord J. Russell was put in possession of all the information on which the late ministers had proceeded, but not of the details of their proposed measures. It was no time for a general election. None but a rash Minister would dream of requiring it while the country was in strong excitement, and under the visible doom of a great calamity. Instead of this, the thing to be done was to frame such a measure of corn-law repeal as would secure the support of Sir R. Peel, and the colleagues who had adhered to him. After a good deal of correspondence, through the Queen, of difficult transaction by statesmen so delicately placed with regard to each other, Lord J. Russell conceived himself justified in attempting to form an administration; and he communicated with the Sovereign to that effect on the 18th of December.² But, next morning, an insuperable difficulty arose. One of the friends on whom he had confidently reckoned as a co-adjutor declined to enter the Cabinet. This was Lord Grey. Highly as Lord J. Russell valued him, he would at any other time have endeavored to form a Cabinet without him, at his own desire; but the position of the Whigs was now too critical — or, at least, their leader thought so — to admit the risk of such speculation as would be excited by the exclusion of Lord Grey. On the 20th, therefore, the Queen was finally informed, that Lord John Russell found it impossible to form an administration.³

Among the newspaper reports of the public talk during this interval, we find a few words in italics about the popular surprise at there being "no mention of Lord Grey" in the list of Whig

¹ Hansard, lxxxiii p. 98.

² Hansard, lxxxiii. p. 106.

³ Hansard, lxxxiii. pp. 101–103.

conferences; and, close beside this, we meet with notice of the "alarm" excited by the consideration that Lord Palmerston must have some office, and most probably the Foreign Department. Our foreign relations were now in a critical state, as our history of the French and American questions will have shown; and there were many who stood in fear of Lord Palmerston's "talent of keeping perpetually open all vital questions and dangerous controversies."¹ It was well understood, that Lord Grey thought it unsafe to make Lord Palmerston Foreign Minister at such a juncture; and that he declined to act inconsistently with his own long-avowed principles of peace, by sitting in the Cabinet with a Minister who had done more than any other man to foster the war-spirit in 1840 and 1841. The disappointed Whig party bitterly complained that "Lord Grey had done it all;" but with the country at large Lord Grey lost nothing by this difficult act of self-exclusion, or by his honorable silence in the midst of the censure which was abundantly poured out upon him.

Lord Grey.

On Friday the 19th, the Queen intimated to Sir R. Peel, that, as their political relation was about to terminate, she wished to see him the next day, to bid him farewell.² Before he went to Windsor on the Saturday, he was informed by Lord John Russell of the failure of his enterprise; and, when he entered the Queen's presence, he was told, that, so far from taking leave, he must prepare for the resumption

Return of Sir Robert Peel to power.

of office. He returned to town as Minister of the Crown, and found no difficulty in reconstructing his Cabinet. Lord Stanley of course retired. All the others remained, — all but one who had died suddenly from the anxiety of the crisis. Lord Wharncliffe had been suffering from gout, but no danger was apprehended. He was, however, in no state to bear the turmoil of the time; and he suddenly sank, on the 19th of December, in the seventieth year of his age.³ As President of the Council, he had proved himself a zealous and effective Minister; and his earnestness in fulfilling to the utmost such provisions for education as had been obtained, secured him much gratitude from society. It was an untoward time for a West-Riding election: but this elevation of Mr. Stuart Wortley to the peerage rendered it necessary; and Lord Morpeth was returned to his old seat without opposition. Mr. Gladstone became Colonial Secretary, instead of Lord Stanley; and the Duke of Buccleuch succeeded Lord Wharncliffe as President of the Council.⁴

Death of Lord Wharncliffe.

And now, once more, all was going well, — well for the people, and, in a large view, well for the Minister. His position was

¹ Spectator, 1845, p. 1186.

³ Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 320.

² Hansard, lxxxiii. p. 89.

⁴ Annual Register, 1846, Chron. 205.

at once an humbling and a glorious one; his course, a hard and yet a straight one. He had to stand up in the face of the world, and say that he had been in error all his life, and that he found himself compelled now to achieve that which he had all his life opposed. This was the hard part, accompanied as it must be by the rage of disappointed partisans, the indignant grief of old friends, and perhaps the intemperate triumph of old enemies. But his position was a glorious one, if he could but show himself equal to it. If, instead of making this the beginning of a new career, as some anticipated, he settled it with himself that this should be his last scene of power, and he could endure calmly what he must go through as a necessary retribution for previous error, and close his career with giving to the nation the benefit it most wanted in the best possible manner, this last scene of his administration might be the noblest. His course must be hard, for there were terrible storms ready to burst in Parliament; and when he had, by a stern and self-forgetting rule, held his party together for the passage of the single great measure now in his hand, his party would fall to pieces, and he might be left alone in his place in the Legislature, after a life of industry and eminent political prosperity. But not the less was his course clear. He must propose and carry through a total repeal of the corn-laws, whatever became of himself. This must be his single and his final aim; and those who knew any thing of "the alacrity of spirit" with which a strong and honorable mind enters on a great work of reparation, self-sacrifice, and general justice, believed that Sir R. Peel would now make manifest to the utmost the nobleness of his position and the singleness of his aim.

As for the Duke of Wellington, the peremptory and inflexible, who had gone through so many changes, and must now go through one more, everybody knew, by dint of repetition, what he would say. He would say that he could not desert his Sovereign. And this is what he did say. "At all events," he declared, "whatever that measure may be, I must say this: that, situated as I am in this country,—highly rewarded as I have been by the Sovereign and the people of England,—I could not refuse that Sovereign to aid her, when called upon, to form a government, in order to enable Her Majesty to meet her Parliament, and to carry on the business of the country.¹ Upon that ground, my Lords, I present myself to your Lordships."

Sir Robert Peel's position.

The Duke of Wellington's position.

¹ Hansard, lxxxiii. p. 170.

CHAPTER XV.

THE royal speech, delivered by the Queen in person on the 19th of January, expressed satisfaction in the results of the repeal of customs-duties, as far as they had yet gone, and recommended to Parliament the consideration whether the repeal of restrictions might not be carried yet further; whether there might not still be a remission "of the existing duties upon many articles, the produce or manufacture of other countries."¹

The remission took place on several articles of the tariff without much opposition. Almost the only raw materials still subject to duty were tallow and timber; and these were to be extensively reduced. In consideration of the release of so much raw material, the manufacturers were expected to acquiesce in the reduction of some remaining articles of manufacture; and this they showed all willingness to do. And well they might; for the Minister's exposition proved the vast increase of the silk manufacture in England, in proportion to the removal of duties.² There was to be a considerable reduction of the duty on silk manufactures, with more certainty of levy; and the duties on cotton and woollen fabrics were removed, or lessened one-half. The differential duties on free-labor sugar were reduced,—the higher from 11s. 8d. to 8s.; and the lower from 9s. 4d. to 5s. 10d. On brandy and foreign spirits, the duty was brought down nearer to the point which might obviate smuggling; that is, from 22s. 10d. per gallon to 15s. Animal food and vegetables were to be admitted duty free; and butter, cheese, hops, and cured fish, reduced one-half. Live animals were freed from duty; and a considerable number of minor and "unenumerated articles." The Minister was strengthened by the successes of former years, and by the absorbing of men's mind in the corn-subject; and these remissions passed without any effectual opposition. The sugar-duties, however, were left over for subsequent consideration.

The revenue showed indisputably the results of former remissions. There was this year a clear surplus of 2,380,600³l.

¹ Hansard, lxxxiii. p. 1.

² Hansard, lxxxiii. pp. 239-283.

³ Hansard, lxxxvi. p. 1432.

There was a considerable increase in the consumption of those excisable commodities which are connected with the ^{The revenue prospectus.} comfort of the mass of the people; more money was in the savings-banks; and there was something better still, — a more significant and more blessed token of prosperity than any other, — there was a marked decrease of crime. But for the impending famine, there could be no doubt that our country was on the way to a prosperity which must for ever have settled opinions about the policy of free-trade.

It was on the 27th of January that the above tariff reductions were proposed, in the same speech that was to announce the ministerial plan about the corn-laws. "Every crevice" into which a stranger could thrust himself was occupied; and hundreds who held tickets were obliged to remain in the streets. Prince Albert and the Duke of Cambridge sat below the bar. The Minister's speech lasted four hours. It was listened to for the most part in quietness; but some paragraphs were vehemently cheered by the opposition.

All agricultural produce which serves as cattle-food, such as buckwheat and Indian corn, was to be admitted duty ^{Corn-duties.} free.¹ It was this provision which wrought better than any other precaution whatever to reduce the pressure of the subsequent famine in Ireland; for Indian meal is a good article of human food, — far superior to potatoes. All colonial grain was to bear a merely nominal duty. This would be good news in our Australian colonies, whenever the tidings could reach so far. As for other grain, all protection was to cease in three years; and that time was allowed for the farmers to accommodate themselves to the change. In the interval, the duties were to be considerably reduced.² When wheat was under 48s. per quarter, the duty was to be 10s. When at 1s. higher, the duty was to be 1s. lower, till wheat should be at 54s. and the duty at 4s.; after which the duty should not further change. The same principle and proportion were to apply to other kinds of grain. The immediate effect would be to reduce the duty, at the existing price of wheat, from 16s. to 4s. It was proposed to ^{Relief to farmers.} afford some important relief to the farmers, otherwise than by laying burdens on other classes. Loans of public money were to be attainable by persons contemplating agricultural improvements. The law of settlement was to be so altered as to prevent country parishes from being burdened with laborers when adversity pressed on the manufacturing districts. Five years' industrial residence was henceforth to constitute a settlement. The cost of prisoners was to be taken off the county-rates. By a consolidation of the highway departments, — a consolidation

¹ Hansard, lxxxiii. p. 256.

² Hansard, lxxxiii. p. 263.

which would reduce the Boards from 16,000 to about 600,—a vast relief from waste and mismanagement would be obtained. Such were the main features of the scheme. Objections naturally sprang up on all sides. The Protectionists were, of course, furious; and their antagonists were sorry—and especially on account of the farmers themselves—that there was to be an interval of three years before the corn-trade was free. The farmers' friends looked on the accompanying provisions of relief as a mere mockery; and some derided the multifarious character of the scheme. But, after all objections were made, there remained the grand and simple fact, that in three years the corn-laws would be no more. The manufacturers threw away with joy such remaining duties as had been called a protection to them; and the League leaders, who had invariably declared that they would support any man of any party who would obtain the repeal of the corn-laws, now gave their whole strength to the Minister and his scheme.

The debate began on the 9th of February, and extended over twelve nights between that and the 27th, when there was a decision in favor of the government by a majority of 97 in a House of 577.¹ On the 2d of March, the House went into committee, when four nights more were filled with debate, before the second reading was carried by a majority of 88. A last effort was made, in a debate of three nights, to prevent a third reading; but it was carried, at four in the morning of the 16th of May, by a majority of 98 in a House of 556 members.²

In the Lords, the majority in favor of the second reading was 47 in a full House,—a more easy passage than could have been anticipated. The few amendments that were proposed were negatived; the Bill passed on the 22d of June, and became law on the 26th of the same month.

During this long series of debates, every consideration that had ever been urged for or against a repeal of the corn-laws was brought up again.³ There is no need to repeat any of them here. Every personality that could pass the lips of educated men and gentlemen, in our period of civilization, was uttered by angry antagonists; and not a few which it is surprising that educated men and gentlemen could listen to without discountenance and rebuke. It would do no good to repeat any of them here. The principal new points, not mere personality, were the extraordinary denial, on the part of the Protectionists, of the existence or probability of famine in Ireland, though such an amount of evidence was laid before the House as might have been expected to bear down all party rancor and all pride of opinion, and to induce sympathy with the Administration in the most prejudiced man in the House.

¹ Hansard, lxxxiv. p. 349.

² Hansard, lxxxvi. p. 721.

³ Hansard, lxxxvii. p. 1033.

On this, also, there is no occasion to enlarge. Time has shown what the condition of Ireland was, and was to be; and the keenest Protectionist is now probably astonished that he could ever doubt it, after listening to the evidence offered by Sir Robert Peel and Lord Lincoln. On the soundness of that evidence,

^{The Minister.} however, rested so much of the Minister's case, that any appreciation of himself and his position was impossible while his detail of facts was denied. His position during the session was, therefore, hard beyond all parallel. His temper and conduct were worthy of it. He made at first such ample confession of the error of a life; maintained so simply the duty and dignity of avowing error, instead of being obstinate and silent; bore so magnanimously the reproaches which were the natural retribution of the mistake which he had held, in common with almost the whole of the Legislature and the aristocracy, during the greater part of his life; and was so sustained under his personal trials by a moral enthusiasm sufficiently rare at all times in the House of Commons, and little expected from him, that, before his retirement, he was looked up to with new feelings by generous-minded men of all parties. His own words will best explain his position and his views. "You have a right, I admit," he said, in his final speech on the Bill, "to taunt me with any change of opinion on the corn-laws; but when you say, that, by my adoption of the principles of free-trade, I have acted in contradiction to those principles which I have always avowed during my whole life,—that charge at least, I say, is destitute of foundation.¹ Sir, I will not enter at this late hour into the discussion of any other topic. I foresaw the consequences that have resulted from the measures which I thought it my duty to propose. We were charged with the heavy responsibility of taking security against a great calamity in Ireland. We did not act lightly. We did not form our opinion upon merely local information,—the information of local authorities likely to be influenced by an undue alarm. Before I and those who agreed with me came to that conclusion, we had adopted every means — by local inquiry, and by sending perfectly disinterested persons of authority to Ireland—to form a just and correct opinion. Whether we were mistaken or not,—I believe we were not mistaken,—but, even if we were mistaken, a generous construction should be put upon the motives and conduct of those who are charged with the responsibility of protecting millions of subjects of the Queen from the consequences of scarcity and famine. Sir, whatever may be the result of these discussions, I feel severely the loss of the confidence of those from almost all of whom I heretofore received a most generous support. So far from

¹ Hansard, lxxxvi. p. 705.

expecting them, as some have said, to adopt my opinions, I perfectly recognize the sincerity with which they adhere to their own. I recognize their perfect right, on account of the admitted failure of my speculation, to withdraw from me their confidence. I honor their motives; but I claim, and I always will claim while intrusted with such powers, and subject to such responsibility as the Minister of this great country is intrusted with and is subject to, — I always will assert the right to give that advice which I conscientiously believe to be conducive to the general well-being. I was not considering, according to the language of the honorable member for Shrewsbury, what was the best bargain to make for a party. I was considering, first, what were the best measures to avert a great calamity; and, as a secondary consideration, to relieve that interest which I was bound to protect from the odium of refusing to acquiesce in measures which I thought to be necessary for the purpose of averting that calamity. Sir, I cannot charge myself or my colleagues with having been unfaithful to the trust committed to us. . . . If I look to the prerogative of the Crown; if I look to the position of the Church; if I look to the influence of the aristocracy, — I cannot charge myself with having taken any course inconsistent with Conservative principles calculated to endanger the privileges of any branch of the Legislature, or of any institutions of the country. My earnest wish has been, during my tenure of power, to impress the people of this country with a belief that the Legislature was animated by a sincere desire to frame its legislation upon the principles of equity and justice. I have a strong belief, that the greatest object which we or any other government can contemplate, should be to elevate the social condition of that class of the people with whom we are brought into no direct relation by the exercise of the elective franchise. I wish to convince them, that our object has been so to apportion taxation, that we shall relieve industry and labor from any undue burden, and transfer it, so far as is consistent with the public good, to those who are better enabled to bear it. I look to the present peace of this country; I look to the absence of all disturbance, — to the non-existence of any commitment for a seditious offence; I look to the calm that prevails in the public mind; I look to the absence of all disaffection; I look to the increased and growing public confidence on account of the course you have taken in relieving trade from restrictions, and industry from unjust burdens, — and where there was dissatisfaction, I see contentment; where there was turbulence, I see there is peace; where there was disloyalty, I see there is loyalty; I see a disposition to confide in you, and not to agitate questions that are at the foundations of your institutions."

In a later speech, the very last which he delivered before quitting office, he again recurred to the great consolatory ground of the improved condition of those who can least help themselves.¹ He relinquished power, to use his own words, "with a more lively recollection of the support and confidence I have received during several years, than of the opposition, which, during a recent period, I have encountered. In relinquishing power, I shall leave a name severely censured, I fear, by many who, on public grounds, deeply regret the severance of party ties,—deeply regret that severance, not from interested or personal motives, but from the firm conviction that fidelity to party engagements—the existence and maintenance of a great party—constitutes a powerful instrument of government: I shall surrender power, severely censured also by others, who, from no interested motive, adhere to the principle of protection, considering the maintenance of it to be essential to the welfare and interests of the country. I shall leave a name execrated by every monopolist, who, from less honorable motives, clamors for protection because it conduces to his own individual benefit; but it may be that I leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of good-will in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labor, and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter, because it is no longer leavened with a sense of injustice."

It was quite true that there was a popular disposition "not to agitate questions that are at the foundation of our institutions." The great reform of policy—of procedure—which had now taken place, had excluded all present thoughts of organic change from the mind of the people. Inferior in importance as the late enterprise was to that of reform of Parliament,—inferior in its order and in its import,—it was yet great enough to absorb for the time the political energy of the nation. To arrest the sinking of the agricultural interests of the country, and remove the impediments to a free supply of food, were objects inferior only to any enterprise of organic change; but they were inferior. It does not follow, however, that organic change may not arise from an inferior order of reform; and, in this case, it was clear to those who were aware of the facts, that the power under the Reform Bill, discovered by Mr. Cobden, of renovating county constituencies, must, sooner or later, bring forth vast political results. The system of forty-shilling freehold purchase and registration, begun under the League organization, did not stop when the League dissolved itself. It proceeds, and at an accelerated rate.

¹ Hansard, lxxxvii. p. 1054.

On the 2d of July, the League was "conditionally dissolved," by the unanimous vote of a great meeting of the leaders at Manchester.¹ The body was virtually dissolved; but the executive council had power to call it again into existence, if occasion should arise,—that is, if attempts should be made to revive agricultural protection. Mr. Cobden here joyfully closed his seven years' task, which he had prosecuted at the expense of health, fortune, domestic comfort, and the sacrifice of his own tastes in every way. Sir R. Peel had said of him, in his closing speech, that to one man was the great work of repeal owing, and that that man was Richard Cobden; and Mr. Cobden now declared at Manchester, that, if Sir R. Peel had lost office, he had gained a country. The Leaguers were not called on for more than the first instalment of the quarter of a million they had resolved to raise; and, out of that sum, they voted 10,000*l.*, in his absence, to their chairman, Mr. James Wilson. Mr. Cobden had sacrificed at least 20,000*l.* in the cause. The country now, at the call of the other chief Leaguers, presented him with above 80,000*l.*,—not only for the purpose of acknowledging his sacrifices, but also to set him free for life for the political service of his country.

Early in the session, the ministers had introduced a Bill for the protection of life in Ireland, where the practice of night-assassination was again partially prevailing. The political jealousy of the time was exercised upon this Bill; and it was opposed by a curious medley of members in the Commons, after an easy passage in the Lords. It was thrown out in the Commons on the same night (June 26) when the Corn-law Bill passed the Lords.² The majority against the ministers was 73. Every one knew that the Peel Administration was going out, as soon as the repeal of the corn-laws was achieved; but perhaps this defeat settled the moment. On the 29th, the Duke of Wellington took leave of power in the one House, and Sir R. Peel in the other, in announcing their resignation of office.³

In one sense, Sir R. Peel might be said to take leave of power; but his moral power was destined yet to grow stronger. An old and faithful member of opposition, Mr. Hume, said of him, on this last evening, "that no one over left power carrying with him so much of the sympathy of the people;" and there were multitudes who could not endure the thought of losing him, at the very moment of his discovering himself to the nation in his greatest aspect.⁴ As he left the House on the night of the 29th, leaning on the arm of Sir George Clerk, he was awaited

¹ Spectator, 1846, p. 630.

³ Hansard, lxxxvii. pp. 1039, 1040.

² Hansard, lxxxvii. p. 1027.

⁴ Hansard, lxxxvii. p. 1058.

by a quiet multitude outside, who bared their heads at the sight of him, and escorted him to his house. Some of these probably hoped to hail him as Minister again some day; for it was a common idea throughout the country, that, if there was only one man who could govern the country, that man would have to govern the country, whether he would or no. But he knew better. He knew that his last words were a real farewell.

That which he did not and could not know was the full nobleness of the position which he would henceforth hold. The retiring Minister. He had nothing more to attain. His wealth had always been great; and it was not in the power even of the Sovereign to ennoble him. His honors were of a higher order than those of the peerage, and would have been rather impaired than enhanced by his removal from among the Commons. In the Commons he had no party, because there was no party there; and, if there had been, he had withdrawn from party conflict. He spoke as from his own mind; and his words had singular weight. He sat in the Legislature, a man free from personal aims of every kind, at full leisure, and in full freedom to cast light where it is wanted on any hand, to give guidance and sanction, and material for speculation and action in future years, when he would be no more seen in his place. Men of all parties seemed to agree upon one point in regard to Sir R. Peel,—that his latest position in the British Legislature was the noblest that, in our period of time, could be held by any man.

CHAPTER XVI.

WITH the charm of a youthful Sovereign and a fresh royal generation came, necessarily, the mournfulness of seeing the old drop off,—the old princes and statesmen and warriors whose names had been familiar to us all our lives. The Duke of Sussex, the most popular of the sons of George III.,—the amiable man, the lover of books and of philosophy, the hero of a love-story in the last century, when he married Lady Augusta Murray,—died in April, 1843, in the seventy-second year of his age; and his cousin, the Princess Sophia of Gloucester, followed him in November of the next year, at the age of seventy-one. At the time they died, the reading world was learning, by the Diary of Madame D'Arblay, how these affectionate cousins looked, and what they said, in the days of their early youth, when she was brilliantly handsome, and he full of grace and kindness to everybody in his father's court. They had since had much pain and uneasiness in their lives; and it was time that they were at rest.—The illustrious family of the Wellesleys was breaking up. The Marquis Wellesley, who had ruled India when his brother Arthur won his first successes there, died in 1842, in his eighty-third year; and his younger brother,—but still some years older than the Duke of Wellington and Lord Cowley,—Lord Mornington, followed in 1845. Lord Mornington was Sir R. Peel's predecessor in his early office of Secretary for Ireland. The offices which he subsequently filled were unimportant, except that of Postmaster-general, which he held during the short Peel Administration of 1835. Lord Wellesley was a much more important man to the nation, not only by his Indian administration, but by his strenuous support of his warrior brother during the Peninsular war, when he had to contend with the timidity and carelessness of the government at home, even more painfully than with the French forces abroad. What his government was in Ireland in 1822, and how his liberality excited the wrath of the ascendancy party there, we have seen. His old age was embittered by pecuniary difficulties, such as he had contrived to trouble himself with all his

Death of the
Duke of
Sussex.

Princess
Sophia of
Gloucester.

Marquis
Wellesley.

Lord Morn-
ington.

life. The East-India Company made liberal gifts to him, in acknowledgment of former services; and, after this, his few remaining days slipped away quietly, amidst the solace of books and old friendships; though the wording of some provisions in his will seems to show that he regarded the Administration of Lord Melbourne with no more tranquillity than his friend, Lord Brougham, to whose charge he left the vindication of his memory, "confiding in his justice and honor."¹ — An old friend and com-

rade of the Wellesleys, Lord Hill, died in 1842. He had won glory in Spain, Portugal, and France, and finally at Waterloo; and he earned civic gratitude by his admirable administration of the army — which may be called a civic service — between the years 1828 and 1842. No private interest or political bias ever was seen to affect his distribution of patronage, keen as was the watch kept upon him by the opponents of the successive ministries under which he served. He was seventy when he died. — In the group of old and dying men associated in our minds with our last wars, we may note

Lieutenant-general Sir Hudson Lowe, perhaps the most abused man of his time. He had the misfortune to be appointed jailer to Napoleon at St. Helena. No man could have occupied that post under any circumstances without undergoing cruel anxiety and perpetual embarrassment; but Sir Hudson Lowe had not that support from the government at home which he had a right to expect; and they allowed him to be victimized by calumny, while the fault was theirs, if indeed the fallen Emperor's lot was less easy than it might have been made. Sir H. Lowe appears to have done all that he could, — without thanks, without support, without guidance, — under incessant misconstruction from the world, and intolerable insult from his captive. If there was fault, it appears to have been merely of nerve; and the wonder would have been if he could have maintained nerve and judgment under the daily irritation of his

position. — Of the old statesmen and politicians, more dropped during this period. Lord Grey, after a sick retirement of a few years, died in his eighty-second year, in July, 1845; and, in the same month, Lord Canterbury, the speaker of the Commons for so many years, under the name of Sir Charles Manners Sutton. His age was sixty-

five. — Lord Wallace, the early friend of Jenkinson and Canning, and a holder of office under Mr. Pitt, died in 1844, with the reputation of a Liberal rather than a Conservative, and mourned by the friends of the liberal measures of the day. He was the predecessor of Mr. Huskisson at the Board of Trade, and had the same clear views of the advantages

¹ Annual Register, 1844, Chron. 8.

of free-trade. While Master of the Mint, he greatly improved the coinage. He was one of the very few men who rendered substantial service in office and in Parliament without exciting party feelings in others, probably because he was able to rise above them himself. — Of the Liberal party, several leaders were lost at this time. Sir Henry Parnell, become Lord Congleton, who did as much as a member of Parliament well could do towards financial reform, died by his own hand, in a state of nervous disease, in 1842. He was a Secretary-at-war in the early days of Lord Grey's Administration; but he did not like the financial proceedings of the Whigs, and he resigned in a few months, — a measure absolutely necessary, if he objected to Lord Althorp's projects being attributed to his own principles. As we have before seen, he disclaimed all participation in Lord Althorp's budgets; and it was necessary that he should resign to do this. Under Lord Melbourne, he was paymaster of the forces. As a leading member of the Excise commission, he rendered important service. Lord Congleton had nearly completed his sixty-sixth year at the time of his unhappy death. His place in the House of Lords remains unoccupied, his son and heir being a member of the community of Plymouth Brethren.

The stanch old Liberal, Alderman Wood, of late Sir Matthew Wood, so well remembered as the brave host of Queen Caroline at the most critical turn of her fortunes, died in a good old age, in 1843. — And in the next year the once famous Radical, Sir Francis Burdett. He was no longer a Radical; and it was a misfortune to the Liberal cause that he had ever been one. He was a weak and vain man, — fond of notoriety and scenes, capable of going to prison for libel amidst popular sympathy, and of being found teaching his son to read *Magna Charta*, when called on by the officers of justice on that errand; but he was not capable of the silent self-denial, the long perseverance, the patient labor and good-temper, necessary to the support and furtherance of the cause in adverse times, and up to the moment of success. He fell back; and, falling back, was rejected by Westminster in 1837; and, from that time, he became an avowed Conservative, sitting for North Wiltshire on that interest. He had many requisites for popularity, and he long enjoyed it; but it did not cheer the end of his life, for the mode of his political change was not one which could be regarded with respect by either old or new allies. He died a few days after his wife, in January, 1844, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. — Sir R. Peel's Attorney-general, Sir William W. Follett, a man who wanted only health to have raised him to the highest legal and

political honors, died in office in 1845; the ministers attending his funeral. He was only forty-six. — One of the heroes of our late Indian wars, Major-general Sir William Nott, Sir William Nott. died very soon after attaining the honors and rewards assigned him for his share in redeeming the disgrace of the Afghan war. The Queen gave him honors; Parliament voted him thanks; and the East-India Company presented him with 1000*l.* a year for his life. He returned ill in health: and it is supposed that the excitement of his welcome, especially in his native town of Carmarthen, was too much for him; for he presently sank under disease of the heart. He had reached his sixty-third year.

A few centuries earlier, Sir Robert Ker Porter would have Sir Robert Ker Porter. been a hero of romance; and, as it was, his history has more of the heroic and romantic about it than we look for in our time. His destiny seems to have been determined by no less romantic a person than Flora Macdonald, who fixed his attention on a battle-piece in her house, and explained to him that it was one of the battles of 1745. He was made to be a painter; and this incident, occurring when he was only nine or ten years old, made him the painter of that picture, the "Storming of Seringapatam," which set all artists wondering what lot could be in store for the youth who, at nineteen, could achieve such a work in less time than most men would require to plan it. The picture was destroyed in a fire; but the sketches remained, and many other battle-pieces by the same hand. Young Porter spent much of his life in Russia, and married a Russian princess. He travelled over the most interesting parts of Asia, and made the world the wiser for what he saw. He was next painting sacred subjects for altar-pieces at Venezuela, where he was British consul; and, after seeing what he could of South America, he died at last at St. Petersburg, of apoplexy brought on by the Russian cold, after the heats of Venezuela. He was the brother of the novelists, Jane and Anna Maria Porter. His death took place on the 4th of May, 1842, in the sixty-third year of his age.

Lord Elgin, who gave us the marbles in the British Museum, Lord Elgin. died in 1841. While our ambassador at the Porte, he employed his time and efforts in securing Greek sculptures and medals, in obtaining plans, measurements and elevations of buildings, moulds and casts; and, in 1816, the House of Commons decided to purchase the Elgin marbles for 35,000*l.* Lord Elgin lived to be seventy-four, and to see something of the benefit the nation derived from his labors in Greece. Many natural regrets have been expressed by travellers at the removal of the sculptures from their own place; but subsequent events have

made it clear, that, if they had not been secured, nothing but their fragments would have been left by this time. Their removal has made the Greek wars of recent years one degree less disastrous.

It is a well-known anecdote of Nollekens, that when, in the exhibition of 1806, his eye fell on a bust sent in by a ^{Sir F.} novice, he said, "It is a splendid work. Let the man ^{Chantrey.} be known. Remove one of my busts, and put this in its place." The man was Chantrey, — then twenty-four years old. From that time he was abundantly known, and uniformly successful. He never had any struggles against fortune to tell of, his only cross in life being that his father had wished to make him an attorney when he desired to be "a carver." The two works by which he is perhaps best known, the statue of Lady Louisa Russell and the Sleeping Children in Lichfield Cathedral, were from designs by Stothard. He had not poetic faculty for such designs; but he excelled in monumental sculpture of a simply grave order, — as his statues of Watt and Horner and Canning, and many more, are proofs. Having no near relations, Chantrey left the reversion of his property, after its use by his widow, for the encouragement of art in Great Britain. When he was building a mausoleum for himself, he said to his friend and assistant, Allan Cunningham, that it should be made large enough to hold them both; but Allan had no mind for this. "No," said he, "I should not like, even when I am dead, to be so shut up. I would far rather rest where the daisies would grow over my head." They departed within a year of each other; Chantrey going first, and leaving a generous provision for Cunningham, — to whose poetical mind he owed more than even to his zealous attachment. Chantrey died suddenly, of heart-disease, on the 25th of November, 1841; and Cunningham, on the 5th of the next November. The sculptor was fifty-nine years of age; the poet, fifty-six. It is as a poet, and especially as a song-writer, that Allan Cunningham's name will live. He at- ^{Allan Cun-} tempted various walks of literature, and is well known ^{ningham.} by his "Lives of British Painters;" but his fame rests more securely on his ballads and songs. We shall not forget "It's hame and it's hame," or "A wet sheet and a flowing sea."

There was a great sweep among the painters during this period. Hofland, the landscape-painter, was husband ^{The} to the Mrs. Hofland whose tales for children were so ^{Hoflands.} unboundedly popular for some time after their appearance. The Edgeworths testified to their great value in Ireland; and Queen Charlotte patronized them in England. The husband, too, was favored by the old King; yet the Hoflands suffered cruelly from embarrassments, caused by an unfortunate contract with the Duke of Marlborough, the heavy expenses of which fell, not on the

Peer, but the artist. Both worked hard, as long as years and health would allow; the husband in teaching as well as painting, and the wife in literature and in domestic cares. Mr. Hofland died in January, 1843, and his wife in November, 1844. — In

1844, we lost the aged Nicholson, one of the founders of the Society of Painters in Water-colors, whose last effort, when dying, at the age of ninety-one, was to have himself lifted up, to brighten a dark cloud in a picture of a shipwreck;

and Geddes, the portrait-painter and associate of the Royal Academy, best known, perhaps, by his picture of the "Discovery of the Regalia of Scotland," with a portrait of

Scott; and Grieve, the first scene-painter of his time, who raised that kind of work into a department of art; and, to the regret of all England, Callcott, the respected and

beloved. He was early destined to music, with and by his elder brother; but he turned to painting, and at first to portraits, under the teaching of Hoppner. After 1803, however, he devoted himself to landscape-painting, and earned the title of the English Claude. He married the well-known writer, Maria Graham, whose health was undermined before this second marriage. His devoted watching over her destroyed his health, and impaired in proportion his professional efforts; and when she died, in 1842, he was more like a man of eighty than of sixty-three; and he was no longer able to paint. In 1844, the Queen made him conservator of the royal pictures; an office which was valuable to him, not only for its honor and profit, but because it afforded him occupation and interest which were not too great for his strength. Up to the last week of his life, he exerted himself to complete an improved catalogue of the Queen's pictures, and then died, on the 23d of November, after a decline of at least six years. His serene expanses, wide horizons, melting distances, rippling waters, and lucid Dutch river-scenes, will always refresh and gratify the eye, through all changes of taste in art.

The year 1845 was a sad one too. In January died the aged painter Smirke, the father of the two architects of well-known name, and a Royal Academician from the year of Sir Joshua Reynolds's death, 1792; and Phillips, also a Royal

Academician, and one of the most eminent of English portrait-painters. He succeeded Fuseli, in 1824, in the professorship of painting in the Royal Academy, delivering ten lectures which have a good reputation; and he wrote a good deal on painting in Rees's "Cyclopædia;" but his fame rests on his portraits. He established something better than fame in the hearts of brother-artists, and of all who know what he did for the protection and benefit of the profession. — In the same year

died, aged only thirty-three, a man from whom great things were hoped, — William John Müller, a landscape and costume painter of high excellence. He followed his art ^{John Müller.} into the wildest recesses of Greece, and high up towards the sources of the Nile. At a great sacrifice of connection, money, and time, he accompanied, at his own request, Sir Charles Fellows's last expedition to Lycia, and brought back sketches of extraordinary value, which sold for above 4000*l.* after his death. Some pictures, from which he hoped every thing that could compensate him for his sacrifices, were so hung in the exhibition of 1845 as to be unnoticed. The disappointment preyed on his mind, and prostrated his strength. Whether disease had before fixed itself fatally in his frame, there is no saying now; but he pined and sank, dying of enlargement of the heart, on the 8th of September following his disappointment. — A sadder event than even this gave a shock to the whole nation, a few months afterwards. In June, 1846, our historical painter, Haydon, ^{Haydon.} destroyed himself, in anguish under poverty and mortification. He was a man of temperate habits, but incapable of prudence and skill in the management of affairs. He was in debt almost all his life; and he discouraged his patrons by making his pictures too large to be hung, and by other perversities which another kind of man would have avoided, without injury to his artistical aim. It is not difficult to account for his misfortunes; but there is no one who does not deeply mourn them. There is no one who cannot feel what must have been the anguish of a man so sensitive when no commissions came in; when his exhibition in April so failed as that only four persons came the first day, while crowds were struggling for entrance to see Tom Thumb. "How different it would have been twenty-six years ago!" he wrote in his diary. He became grave and silent in his family, and superstitious in his entries in his diary. In one week, he noted down the visitors to his exhibition as 133½, while 12,000 went to see Tom Thumb, — not asking himself, unhappily, how few of the 12,000 he would have cared to see in his room. On the 16th of June, he wrote to the Prime Minister and two others, stating that he had a heavy sum to pay. "Tormented by Disraeli, harassed by public business," as the grateful artist wrote, "Sir R. Peel was the only one who replied;" and the reply was instant and kind, enclosing 50*l.* Six days afterwards occurs the last entry, — Lear's words, "Stretch me no longer on this rough world;" and, before the ink was dry, the overwrought sufferer had shot himself. His family were taken immediate care of by the Queen, the Minister, and the friends of art and artists. Haydon did what he could to raise the ideal and practice of historical painting in England. He lectured and wrote and

taught and discoursed. But he was not one who could be made secure and happy by any thing that he could do for art, or any thing that men could do for him, in a state of society like our own. If he could ever have fitted any time, it was certainly not our own. He saw historical painting more likely to thrive in England than ever before, and knew that it was partly by his own efforts; yet there seemed no room for hope that any picture of his would appear on the walls of the new Houses of Parliament. The Fine Arts Commission took no notice of him; and when, by opening his exhibition, he invited the public to judge his claims, the public took no heed, and his heart was broken. His most appreciated work appears to have been "Christ entering Jerusalem," which he exhibited in 1820. Another which, through the engraving, roused a wide popular sympathy, was "Napoleon at St. Helena." Benjamin Robert Haydon was sixty years old.

Mazzinghi. — Of musicians, there died, during the period, Joseph

Count Mazzinghi, at the age of eighty, who had actually been chosen director at the Opera-house at the age of nineteen, and who continued a popular composer during his long life; and,

Liston. of actors, the great laugh-maker, Liston. Of all things

in the world, Liston was, first, usher in a school; and when he took a fancy for the stage, it was for tragedy. Nevertheless, it was reserved for him to make 100*l.* per week in comedy; and to make it fairly, for, while he was yet receiving only 60*l.* per week, as Paul Pry, the manager cleared 7000*l.* in the season. In the provinces, he often received from 250*l.* to 350*l.* per week; an indication of the English being a laughter-loving people, after all that can be said of their tendency to solicitude and solemnity. Liston was truly an artist, amidst all his license to take liberties with the public mirth. He studied his most grotesque characters as carefully as if they had been tragic. He was a man of domestic habits and irreproachable character; and he reached the age of sixty-nine amidst the serious respect of his friends, as well as the delight of a laughing nation. He died in March, 1846, in the seventieth year of his age. — Mr. Loudon's name seems to belong to the list

Loudon.

of artists, so artistically did he instruct the public taste in gardening, planting, and rural architecture. He was a native of Lanarkshire, and came to England in 1803, to practise as a landscape-gardener, when he was only twenty years old. He travelled abroad to obtain information, and on his return published one after another of that long series of works, of which the "Encyclopædia of Gardening" is best known; and next to that, perhaps, his "Encyclopædia of Cottage, Farm, and Village Architecture." One of his great works, the "Arboretum Britannicum," involved him in difficulties which he wore himself out to

surmount. His sufferings of body were of the severest kind ; but his energy of mind was indomitable. His spirit of enthusiasm must have lightened and sweetened his life more than any pecuniary prosperity could have done. Among his achievements, one of the best known is the laying-out of the Derby Arboretum, — the great garden presented to the people of Derby by their generous townsman, Mr. Joseph Strutt. Mr. Loudon was fifty years old when he died, in December, 1843.

In 1842 occurred one of the greatest losses to the scientific world that the century has to show. But that vast discoveries become more common with every century, ours would be as much signalized by the fame of Sir Charles Bell, as the ^{Sir Charles} seventeenth is by that of Harvey. Harvey proved ^{Bell.} the circulation of the blood, and was believed by no physician in Europe who was above forty at the time of his death. Sir Charles Bell discovered the diversities which exist in the structure and functions of the nerves ; and his demonstrations of the facts were so clear, and the consciousness of ignorance has so far extended in our more enlightened age, that the only dispute which occurred was as to who ought to appropriate the honor of the discovery. It is settled, past all controversy, that the honor belongs to Sir Charles Bell. He has pointed out to us, that we have, bound up in the same sheath, nerves of sensation and nerves of motion, and, as he believed, nerves for other functions also ; and it would be a bold thing to say, that any discovery in connection with our mysterious human frame was ever more important in itself, or more fraught with future significance. Sir Charles Bell did many more things, during his active and devoted life ; but it is this which gives him a high place in the history of his country. He was the youngest of the four eminent brothers Bell, — Robert, the Edinburgh lawyer ; the great surgeon, John ; and George Joseph, the law-professor in Edinburgh University, — being his elder brothers. Sir Charles Bell died suddenly, but not to the surprise of his friends, of *angina pectoris*, — a disease of some standing, — on the 27th of May, 1842, aged sixty-eight. He was knighted by William IV. on his accession, together with Herschel, Brewster, Ivory, and other men of science. His private life was simple, serene, and happy ; but he suffered much anxiety of mind about professional matters, and latterly especially about the relation of his profession to the law ; and these anxieties are believed to have hastened his death. — It was a disease of the heart, which, in the next year, carried off Mr. Kemp. Kemp, the chemical lecturer in the Edinburgh University, who laid the world under obligations to him before his departure at the age of thirty-six. It was he who introduced amalgamated zinc plates into galvanic batteries. “ Let us never

forget," wrote an eminent man, after his death, "to whom we owe this discovery, which of itself enables galvanic batteries to be used in the arts. Ages to come will, perhaps, have to thank the inventor, whom we are too apt to forget; yet the obligation from the public to Mr. Kemp is the same." He distinguished himself before the British Association at Edinburgh, in 1834, by his display of the results of his bold investigations. He died in December, 1843.—In August, 1844, died the president of the

Francis
Baily. Astronomical Society, Mr. Francis Baily. He left the Stock Exchange, where he had made an ample fortune, in 1825, and devoted himself to philosophical pursuits for the rest of his life,—nearly twenty years. He organized the Astronomical Society; improved the "Nautical Almanac;" stimulated the new series of pendulum experiments which exposed so many reasons for new care; aided the commission of weights and measures; aided the Astronomical Catalogue of the British Association; gave to the world the correspondence and catalogues of Flamsteed; and wrote the best treatise that exists on life-annuities and insurance. It is a pleasure to record such instances as these of the use which English men of business make of their wealth and leisure, when they have had enough of money-getting, and have preserved a taste for higher things.—An aged man died in the same summer, whose name will never be lost from the

Dalton. records of science,—Dr. Dalton. Dalton was an usher in north-country schools till he was seven and twenty, when he was recommended to the chair of mathematics and natural philosophy at the New College, Manchester. This was in 1793; and at Manchester he lived for the rest of his days, dying there in July, 1844, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. He saw Paris, and went to London occasionally, and was everywhere received with honor: for his discoveries were known all over the world; and it was pure pleasure to pay homage to one so simple and benign. His body lay in state in the town-hall of Manchester, and was visited by more than 40,000 persons in one day. His atomic theory, the discovery of which he entered upon in 1803, is considered, at present, probably the most important contribution ever made to chemistry. Dr. Thomas Thomson first understood and made known the scope of it; Wollaston instantly apprehended it; and Davy followed, after an interval of resistance and ridicule. By the application of mathematics to chemistry, and Dalton's subsequent efforts to bring chemical analysis nearer to a chance of correctness, the knowledge of chemical combinations has been marvellously simplified, and the processes of chemical analysis have been raised from a looseness too like hap-hazard to something approaching to mathematical precision. Such precision extends

from scientific discovery to the arts of life; and manufacturers are benefited at the same time with the experiments of the laboratory. This discovery of Dalton's is sometimes called by the name he chose,—the atomic theory; sometimes by Wollaston's,—the theory of chemical equivalents; sometimes by Davy's,—the theory of chemical proportions; but, under every name, the laws of relative proportion laid down by Dalton are confirmed by every improvement in the practice of chemical analysis. He has been called the legislator of his science, which was before merely empirical. He was framed for scientific despotism by his sagacity, his simplicity, and his self-reliance. He was a Quaker; and no member of his sect led a life more regular and innocent,—without austerity, dulness, vanity, or spiritual pride. In face he was like Newton; and, like Newton, he was never married. He did not overwork his brain. His brain was strong, and his nervous system good; and he recreated himself with a game at bowls every Thursday, and with a sight of his native Cumberland mountains every summer. Long before his death, he was a member of almost every royal academy and scientific institute in Europe.

Among the literary men who died during this period, the most difficult to class is Theodore E. Hook, so various in character ^{Theodore E. Hook.} are his works. He began with the drama, and gave several comedies and farces to the stage before he was twenty-three. Then he turned to novel-writing; and then, as editor of the "John Bull," to politics, or what he called such. Then he wrote novels again, and biography; his lives of Kelly and of Sir David Baird, and his "Sayings and Doings," "Love and Pride," and "Gilbert Gurney," being perhaps the best known of his later works. Theodore Hook's life was a merry, but not a happy one. He was disgraced through carelessness in his office of accountant-general at the Mauritius, by which there was a deficiency in the Treasury. He made enemies on every hand by the libellous tone of his newspaper; and he was perpetually overwrought by toil, while wasting his resources of purse, health, and time, in dissipation. He was, however, the leading wit of his time in the old-fashioned method of London dissipation; and in his career we seem to see revived, with little alteration, the raking poor author of each former century. Theodore Hook was only fifty-two when he died, in August, 1841. — ^{Maturin.} Maturin, an Irish clergyman, who wrote two novels in a Byronic style which became popular,—"Bertram" and "Melmoth the Wanderer,"—died in 1842; and the same year, died another Irish novelist of far higher merit, John Banim, author of the "O'Hara Tales," "The Boyne Water," "Father Connell," and others. ^{Banim.} It was Banim who first opened up those aspects

of Irish life which have since been exhibited by Carleton, Griffin, and others, and which are as unlike the pictures of the Edgeworths and the Morgans as Fielding is unlike Richardson. The tragedy of humble life was Banim's department, and he wrought in it with great power. He had himself but too much experience of the tragic side of human life. He attempted editorship at seventeen years old, married at twenty, suffered from sickness and poverty for many years, — a poverty which seemed scarcely reduced by a pension granted him in 1837, — and died in his

forty-second year. — Captain Hamilton ranks among the novelists for his "Cyril Thornton;" but he is no less known by his contributions to "Blackwood's Magazine," and his "Men and Manners in America." He was a soldier, filling up his leisure after the peace with literary occupation. His works show a highly trained ability; and his calm temper and judgment, and admirable manners, appearing through his writings to those who never saw his face, gave a weight to what he said, which is sometimes desired in vain by men of greater power. — In curious companionship with the poor novelists of the time, the

Hooks and Banims and Hoods, we find Mr. Beckford's name, — the William Beckford who was born to 100,000*l.* a year. His true monument is his novel, "Vathek," though he spent enormous amounts of money in building his wonderful edifice of Fonthill. His great tower, 300 feet high, fell down, was rebuilt, and fell again; but "Vathek" remains. The nine days' wonder of Mr. Beckford's eccentricities and the Fonthill sale has long been forgotten; but the vivacity and power of his "Letters on Italy, Spain, and Portugal," are as keen as ever. Mr. Beckford was the son and heir of the Alderman Beckford whose celebrated extempore speech to George III. is engraved on his monument in Guildhall. The production of "Vathek" seems to have been an instance of impromptu ability quite as remarkable. Mr. Beckford used to declare that it was written at one sitting; that is, in three days and two nights, during which he never took off his clothes. It was written in French, and afterwards translated without his knowledge, and with little skill. Byron used to think it the best attempt at the oriental style of fiction ever made by a European. It appeared first at Lausanne, in 1784. This carries us very far back; but Mr. Beckford was then twenty-four years of age. He lived sixty years longer,

dying at Bath, in May, 1844. — Thomas Hood, the author of "Tylney Hall," was classed among the novelists on that account; but he belongs to other departments too. He was a wit, as every page of every one of his writings may show; and we have the "Plea of the Midsummer Fairies," and "Eugene Aram's Dream," and the "Song of the Shirt," to prove him a poet.

He was an editor of annuals and of magazines ; but our interest in him is from the remarkable union, in his genius, of wit, sense, and pathos. It is true that we never see real wit apart from sound sense, and rarely from pathos ; but, in Hood, all so abounded together, and in the strictest union, as to give almost an impression of a fresh order of genius. He was one of the sufferers of his order,—a sufferer from sickness and poverty ; and he was in the depths of these troubles, when he had cause, like poor Haydon, to wonder how the Prime Minister, in the midst of harassing cares and a load of business, could attend to his interests, and consult his feelings with all the nicety of leisure. The letter of Sir R. Peel to Hood, announcing the grant of a pension, remains one of the chief honors of the great statesman. Poor Hood died soon after : the pension was granted to his widow ; and in a few months she also died. The children were taken care of, as it was indispensable to the conscience of society that they should be ; for their father was truly a social benefactor. He was always on the right side in matters of morals and of feeling,—full of faith in good, and sympathy in all that was generous and true. His satire was directed upon whatever was foul, false, and selfish. He was forty-seven when he died, in May, 1845.

In the same year, a few weeks earlier, died untimely a man who was held in warm regard by his friends, and in ^{Laman} respect by those of the public who knew what his ser- ^{Blanchard.} vices were,—Laman Blanchard, who edited, in his time, three newspapers, and the “Monthly Magazine,” and contributed largely to periodicals. His consistent and enlightened political opinions and conduct were of service to the public morality of his time ; and his early loss was deplored for other reasons than the sadness of the mode in which it happened. The illness and death of his wife had so worn him that brain-seizures came on ; and after one of these, in a state of nervous prostration, he destroyed himself. His orphans, too, found protection from society.—Under the date 1817, our history has exhibited the narrative ^{Wm. Hone.} and indicated the effects of the trials of William Hone for blasphemy and libel.¹ It was pointed out that we owe to those trials the vast improvement in our libel-law, and in its application. William Hone wrought well in literature after those days, giving us the volumes that Southey and other men of curious knowledge have praised so highly,—the “Every-day Book,” the “Table Book,” and the “Year Book.” Mr. Hone was in his sixty-fourth year when he died, in 1842.—In ^{Robert} the same year we lost Robert Mudie, whose works on ^{Mudie.} natural history are true poems. He was a self-educated Scotch-

¹ Ante, vol. ii. p. 138.

man; and when he wrote about things that he understood, as in his "Feathered Tribes of the British Islands," he plunged his readers into the depths of nature as the true poet alone can do. He is another example, as White of Selborne and Audubon were before him, of the indissoluble connection between a nice and appreciative observation of nature and the kindling of a spirit of poetry.

Perhaps the most successful essayist of his time was the Rev.

John Foster. John Foster, last of Bristol. His "Essays" passed through eighteen editions during his life; and they are still spreading. There is no great precision in the thoughts; but the tone of morality is pure, and the views are original and broad, while the style is eminently interesting. The volume was one which met the wants of the time; and if some of the matter is vague, and the views narrow, they were a welcome escape from the shallow prosings which they superseded. Mr. Foster published one other volume, on "The Evils of Popular Ignorance," and a mass of contributions to the "Eclectic Review." He died Henry Nelson Coleridge. in 1843, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. — Henry Nelson Coleridge, nephew of the poet, and editor of his "Literary Remains," died in middle age, in 1843. He published an "Introduction to the Study of the Greek Classic Poets;" but he is more widely known by a whimsical volume, full of beauty of description, — "Six Months in the West Indies."

The year after, in February, 1844, died a Mr. John Wright, John Wright. who would have remained obscure, in spite of much literary effort, but for his sagacity and industry in regard to a single enterprise. The thirteenth Parliament of Great Britain is commonly called the unreported Parliament, but was saved from being wholly dumb to a future generation by Sir Henry Cavendish having diligently reported its debates to the best of his ability. Sir Henry Cavendish's notes, written in short-hand, were found among the Bridgewater manuscripts in the British Museum; and Mr. Wright made the key to the short-hand, transcribed the debates, and was printing them, with illustrations of the parliamentary proceedings of the time, when the useful work was stopped by his death, at the age of seventy-

Henry F. Cary. three. — Henry F. Cary, the translator of Dante, and also of "The Birds" of Aristophanes, and of Pindar's "Odes," died in 1844. His Dante was little noticed till Coleridge made it known; after which it remained the standard translation. Dr. Cary was a most industrious man of letters, both in his office of assistant-librarian at the British Museum, and in his favorite labor of editing our native poets and writing their lives, in continuation of Johnson's biographies.

The poets Southey and Campbell died during this period;

men as opposite in their natures and modes of living as poets can be conceived to be. It will probably be undisputed that Campbell was the greater poet, and Southey the nobler man. While our language lasts, Campbell's lyrics will make music in it. While Great Britain has mariners, his "Mariners of England" will kindle a glow in the nation's heart; and scores of lines from his most successful poem, the "Pleasures of Hope," have become so hackneyed, that few people, on hearing them, know where they come from, or fail to suppose they must be Shakspeare's. He was known all over the world as the author of the "Pleasures of Hope;" and used to complain of it as the introduction to every act of his social life. He could not be born as the author of the "Pleasures of Hope;" but he was so announced on his marriage, on his travels, on his introduction to great personages, on every re-appearance before the world as an author; and a friend who had heard him thus complain, tells us that it was with a sort of mournful amusement, that, looking into the grave in Westminster Abbey at the last moment, he saw on the coffin-plate, "Thomas Campbell, author of the 'Pleasures of Hope,'" &c. &c. Campbell's own favorite among his poems was "Gertrude of Wyoming;" but, well as the public liked it, his fame still rested on his earlier productions. Campbell's constitution and temperament were not favorable to the conditions of a happy life. He sometimes enjoyed greatly, — he often suffered bitterly; and he was unable to merge his self-regards either in sustained industry or in the interests of others. With many generous impulses, and strong claims to respect in his relations of son and brother, he was not a serene or happy man. After a life of strong excitements and conflicting sensibilities, he died on the 15th of June, 1844, at Boulogne, where he had settled a year before. He was in his sixty-eighth year. His funeral in Westminster Abbey was attended with all the pomp which could mark the national gratitude to a great poet. — Very unlike this was Southey's genius and Southey's career.

Thomas
Campbell.

Robert
Southey.

His life was one of purity and virtue almost austere. His domestic affections were warm; his domestic temper venerable and sweet; his self-denial and benevolence for the sake of the erring and the helpless were a life-long protest against the injurious laxity which enters into our estimate of the morals of genius. He was eminently happy in his life-long toils. He loved labor for itself, and he loved the subjects on which he toiled; and his conscience, nice as it was, could not but be satisfied and gratified at the spectacle of the aid and solace which, by his labors, he was able to give beyond his own family, to some who had no natural claim on him for support. In the spectacle of his social and domestic virtues, all remembrance of a bitter

political and religious spirit may well be sunk. He was not a man qualified to have opinions, strictly so called. He could not sympathize in any views but those immediately held by himself; and the views which he most quarrelled with were usually those which had been, no long time before, virulently held by himself. He wrote a vast quantity, and never with carelessness or haste. Of his poems, "Thalaba" is, no doubt, the greatest blessing to his most youthful readers, to whom its pure sweetness of morals and oriental imagery are most attractive; and "Roderick" is perhaps decided to be of the highest order. He was a graceful essayist and critic, as is shown in his contributions to the "Quarterly Review;" a spirited biographer, as his popular "Life of Nelson" may show; and a painstaking and elegant historian, as we see in his "History of the Peninsular War." His essays and histories were vitally injured by his imperfections as a thinker, and his tendency to prejudice and intellectual passion; but he was always earnest and sincere, — always kindly in act when most intolerant in thought. He suffered bitterly from the illness and death of his first wife; and so bitterly as never to recover his power of mind. He formed a second marriage while already sinking in health; and became lost in mind, through pressure on the brain, three years before his death, which took place on the 21st of March, 1843. He had been poet-laureate since 1813, and was succeeded in the office by Mr. Wordsworth, who holds it now. — Before quitting the review of the literary men who died during the period before us, we must name with them the publisher who was the friend of all literary men. John Murray, the prince of publishers, introduced Scott and Byron to each other's acquaintance; and Southey and Crabbe, and Scott and Wilkie. He was a man of a noble heart in regard to literature and authors; and happily a noble prosperity enabled him to gratify his generous dispositions. His pride was in giving great gifts of literature to the world, and of solace to their authors. It was he who presented us with the "Quarterly Review," and most of the greatest works of the greatest men during the present century; for he began business when he came of age in 1799, and carried it on in full vigor till his death in 1843. His first highly successful enterprise was Mrs. Rundell's "Cookery Book;" and the next, the "Quarterly Review," which he set up in 1809, and which remains the property of his house. When, in after-times, men read of the generous and enlightened publishers who first succeeded to the patrons of authors, it will not be forgotten that our age had a John Murray.

Of other benefactors of the century, we find that Dr. Birkbeck, the founder of mechanics' institutes, died in 1841, in the sixty-sixth year of his age. When the depart-

Dr. Birk-
beck.

ure of this excellent man was known, there was sorrow over all the land where the working-men met for self and mutual instruction.—Another eminent friend of popular enlightenment was William Allen, who aided in founding the British and Foreign School Society, and in seeing what could be ^{Wm. Allen.} done by the Lancasterian schools. He was also one of the most active of the indefatigable abolitionists, and aided first in the extinction of the British slave-trade, and then in the overthrow of colonial slavery. He was a man of science, too, the friend of Davy, and for many years lecturer on chemistry and natural philosophy at Guy's Hospital and the Royal Institution. After a life of varied good works, the enlightened and benevolent William Allen, whom the Friends had the honor of including in their sect, died in the seventy-fourth year of his age, at the close of 1843.—Two of his friends and fellow-laborers soon followed him.—Mrs. Fry in 1845, in her sixty-fifth ^{Elizabeth Fry.} year; and Thomas Clarkson in 1846, in the eighty-sixth year of his age. If it be true, as we are wont ^{Thomas Clarkson.} to say, that the distinctive social effect of Christianity is its inducing the care of the helpless who were before left to perish, the existence of such persons as these three—Allen, Clarkson, and Mrs. Fry—at one time, and in close companionship, marks our age as a Christian one, after all its drawbacks. The ignorant, the guilty, and the enslaved were the chief care in life to these friends, who might have passed their years in ease and indolence, or the gratification of merely intellectual tastes; but it suited their noble natures better to go out on the highways of the sea and land, and search through dark alleys, and disgusting prisons, and hellish slave-ships, to seek and save that which was lost. They sustained, moreover, the most irksome and dispiriting toil, the most disheartening disappointment,—a long and painful probation of heart and mind,—in pursuit of their objects; and they died, all faithful to the aims of their life. When Mrs. Fry entered the room in Newgate where 160 guilty and ignorant wretches were shut up, and in her serene and noble countenance brought them the hope which they had believed to be for ever shut out, she began that reform in the treatment of moral disease which, however tentative and vague at present, can never now stop short of completion. And when Clarkson sat down, his heart throbbing with his new knowledge of the wrongs of the negro, and resolved to devote his life to the redemption of that helpless race, the greatest step was taken ever known to have been taken by any man for the assertion and establishment of human rights. And Clarkson was not one to forsake an aim. He lived for the cause to the very last, and drew in others to live for it. Mistakes were made by his co-adjutors and himself;

for, in enterprises so new and vast, the agents have to learn as they go; but the national conscience was roused, the principles of human liberty were asserted, the national testimony was transferred to the side of right, and the emancipation of all races of men was made a question merely of time. As it was Clarkson who began, and who stimulated Wilberforce and all other good men to carry on the work, whom could we place higher than Clarkson on our list of benefactors? Wilberforce and all other good men assigned him the first place; and there he remains, and will remain.

A Roman-Catholic lady, well educated, and deeply impressed with the advantages of education, was living in the neighborhood of London during the whole of the period of our history, watching the results of the efforts made by Lord Brougham and others for the extension and improvement of education in England. Miss Flaherty. Her name was Flaherty. She was not rich; but she was unmarried, and free to live as she chose, and dispose of her income as she would. She chose to live frugally, and to ride in an omnibus instead of a better carriage, that she might have means to aid the extension of education. In 1836, she presented to the council of University College the sum of 5000*l.* in the 3½ per cents, out of which scholarships have been founded. This lady has shown us that there is nothing in our modern civilization,—our omnibuses and unsectarian schools,—which can preclude the antique spirit and practice of love and good works; and in this the admirable Mary Flaherty has perhaps left us as true a benefit as in the scholarships which bear her name. She died in 1845, aged eighty-four.

The creation of wealth, and consequently of human life, by means of the cotton manufacture, is pointed out as one of the leading social events of the last century. It is reckoned that the cotton manufacture has added permanently 2,000,000 to our population. Something analogous, on a smaller, but still on a great scale, has been effected in our own time by the agricultural improvements of one man,—Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, who died Earl of Leicester. By the simple and virtuous method of devoting his mind and life to the improvement of the land, Mr. Coke caused a vast permanent increase of wealth, and therefore of labor and subsistence, and therefore of human life. In a single village, where he found 162 inhabitants when he entered on his property, he left 1000; and, for many miles round, a country before poor and almost barren was left by him fruitful and well-peopled. He found his own rental increased from 2200*l.* to above 20,000*l.*; but that was of small account in his eyes, in comparison with the stimulus given to agricultural improvement by his example. The Holkham

sheep-shearing, at which Mr. Coke annually entertained 300 guests for several days, roused a fine spirit among the landed proprietors of England and the farmers of Norfolk, and caused Mr. Coke to be looked upon as one of the chief social benefactors of his time. While in the House of Commons, he was a sturdy Liberal. When the Reform Bill passed, he thought he might be spared from the political world, aged as he then was. He was always called "the first commoner of England;" but, in 1837, when eighty-five years of age, he was made Earl of Leicester. He reached the age of ninety, dying in June, 1842. — There were benefactors of Mrs. Flaherty's order in the cause of agricultural improvements during this period. Dr. Swiney, resident in Camden Town, an eccentric gentleman in some respects, did an act of sober goodness in leaving 5000*l.* to the trustees of the British Museum, for the establishment of a lectureship on geology; and another 5000*l.* to the Society of Arts, to provide, once in every five years, 100 guineas, to be presented, in a goblet of equal value, to the British freeholder who should reclaim the largest extent of waste lands. Dr. Swiney died in 1844. — In 1846 died Mr. Peter Purcell of Dublin, who was mainly instrumental in forming the Royal Agricultural Improvement Society, and who did in Ireland, on a smaller scale, what Mr. Coke was doing in England. He became wealthy through the improvement of land, — caring less for his wealth for its own sake, than as a proof open to all eyes of the direction in which the welfare of Ireland lay. He withdrew from politics, in which he had once been as much involved as any man, and engaged as many of his neighbors as he could in the interests of improved husbandry. More and more laborers were employed; the political temper of his neighbors improved; he grew wealthy; and, when he was gone, all men saw what a benefactor he had been. — When Mr. Coke was called the first commoner of England, the Marquis of Westminster was believed to be "the richest subject in the empire." His importance in our eyes arises, not from the amount of his wealth, but from the mode in which its increase was provided for during this period. The Pimlico estate, before considered a vast property, now has upon it the new squares of Belgrave and Eaton, with Eccleston Street, Wilton Place, and all the new city of palaces which foreigners now look upon as one of the marvels of London. The ultimate rental of this district is scarcely calculable. The Marquis of Westminster had besides a noble library, including a mass of valuable ancient manuscripts, and one of the finest picture-galleries in the kingdom, which was liberally opened to the public. The Marquis of Westminster was a steady Whig for the last forty years of his life, after hav-

ing entered the political world under the auspices of Mr. Pitt. He was raised from his earldom to his marquissate by William IV. But, among all of either title by whom he was preceded or may be followed, he will ever be distinguished by his creations on his Pimlico estate.

B O O K VII.

LAST YEARS OF THE PEACE.



CHAPTER I.

THUS far had this History been written in a time of peace so settled and habitual that the impressions of a season of war were nearly worn out of the minds of even the elder generation. As there was no reason to suppose, in 1846, that England was likely to be involved in any serious quarrel, compelling war; and as the legislation of 1846 formed a marked period by the repeal of the corn-laws, and in them of all remaining "protection" of native industry,—this was the time chosen by the author of the opening chapters of this book for a survey of the thirty years of peace already fulfilled. The lapse of years enables me now to carry on the pacific period to its proper close. For personal reasons, this must be done with less fulness than the plan of the previous history required; but the main results of the measures devised and the growth of a generation reared in an age of peace may be traced almost as effectually in a sketch as in complete detail.

The time comprehended in this sketch extends from Sir R. Peel's retirement from the government, on the 29th of June, 1846, to the Queen's Declaration of War ^{1846-8.} against Russia in March, 1854.

The first great national interest was that for which Sir R. Peel had striven to prepare his countrymen,—the ^{Ireland.} famine in Ireland. The Census Commissioners had ^{The famine.} related some grave facts about the condition of the Irish people in 1841; the Land Occupation Commissioners had disclosed much more: so that, when ministers announced and insisted upon the danger of famine through the failure of the potato, the mere menace was intolerable to the imagination of timid people. Ridicule, hardy unbelief, evil imputations against the great Minister, were all tried to put off the pain of conviction to the last moment.

Complaints were made in Parliament of the meddling of the government with Irish trade by introducing Indian meal into the country in the preceding year, to meet the requirements of the people under a partial failure of the potato crop of 1845. The reply of government was, that the first necessity was to make sure of there being food in the country. If this supply was not secured in the regular course of trade, it must be done irregularly. Care had been taken to derange the ordinary course of trade as little as possible. Supplies were sent for quietly; and they were quietly stored in the Commissariat dépôts, whence they might be obtained by tradesmen for distribution.

This complaint and explanation throw light on one of the most fatal conditions of Irish society at that time. There was no middle class which could be brought into any comparison with that of the peasantry. There was very little manufacture, and scarcely any trade, outside of the large towns. The people had a passion for land: they knew nothing of manufacture, except in certain districts, nor of trade; and, after the manner of men, they despised what they were ignorant of. Thus, when their beloved potato failed, there was no resource. Even if food were bestowed in abundance on the country, there were no means of distributing it. There were rural districts without a shop of any kind. In natural connection with this absence of trade, there were few roads beyond the main lines of communication. This was one of the worst incidents of the whole case. It is the opinion of the administrators of relief, that there was probably no hour of those bitter years when there was not food enough in the ports and the dépôts for the whole people; but, while good and able men were trying all conceivable ways of spreading it over the country, hundreds were dying of hunger. The potato patches of the peasantry were scattered about everywhere,—a multitude of them being accessible only by footpaths or tracks over wild land; and thus the bearers of relief went about peering in all directions for cabin roofs, or any indication that hungry people might be near. On discovering a remote cabin, they more than once found a whole family dead or dying; or they tripped over a body hidden in the long grass. One of those gentlemen, and perhaps more, took boat off the west coast, and a cargo of bags of meal. He put in to shore whenever he saw signs of habitation; and, loaded with meal, followed tracks, picked up guides, and penetrated where it was possible, till his store was exhausted.

The whole dreary story afforded proof to the world of a truth, steadily asserted by sensible men, but little credited in some foreign countries, that the sufferings of Ireland had long been due to social and economical, and not to political causes. Several

causes, large and too complicated to be treated here, had at once possessed the people with a fatal passion for land, and vitiated all methods of holding it. The owners of estates had swamped them in encumbrances; the tenants had no inducement to farm well, besides having little or no capital; and the laborers bid over one another's heads for potato patches, out of which they regained more than such plots could ever yield; viz., the whole subsistence, including rent, except the pitiful amount of wages (6*d.* or 8*d.* a day) which the laborer paid, in the form of farm work, in reduction of his rent. Thus the potato was the sole reliance of a peasantry numerous out of all proportion to the rest of society, — too numerous to have been secure of subsistence under any arrangement of laws and conditions within human power.

As has been related before, the first menace of the coming famine appeared in the autumn of 1845, when the later crop of potatoes was found to be rotting, though the earlier remained sound. That earlier crop was plentiful, and the grain harvest had been good; so that there seemed to be no reason to fear actual scarcity. The government Commission of Inquiry, and the supplies of meal brought in by the Minister, show that no time was lost by him in preparing for any event. It is remarkable, that from Calcutta the sum of 14,000*l.* was sent early in 1846, in consequence of the alarm already created so far away as India; and the distribution of that fund began in April.¹ For weeks and months there seemed to be no special call for such aid; for the potatoes were growing finely elsewhere: but in one week nearly the whole crop rotted; and the oats were almost as bad. The money value of the potatoes and oats destroyed in that one week was sixteen millions of pounds sterling; but the money loss represented but a small part of the evil which had now become inevitable. Money never failed, any more than the total supply of food; yet millions of the people were irresistibly swept away by famine, and the subsequent pestilence. In September, the Irish-Relief Association, which had rendered good service on former occasions, began distributing subscriptions amounting to 42,000*l.* From that time, aid flowed in from all parts of the empire, and from some kind and neighborly people outside of it. The relief came in the form of food, clothing, and personal service, as well as money; and, in the whole history of charity there is nothing finer than the devotedness, united with calmness of wisdom and steadiness of temper, which the Central Committee of the Society of Friends first, and other associations afterwards, opposed to the calamities of the time.

The smallest of their efforts were those which are the most

¹ Transactions of the Central Relief Committee, p. 31.

conspicuous,—the opening of soup kitchens, &c., in the towns. They had to introduce new kinds of food into provinces where rice and meal and bread, and all roots but potatoes, were things unknown. A girl in Mayo might represent her whole neighborhood. She turned away from all mention of any new vegetable, and “hoped the Lord would take her to himself before she ate turnips.” The poor thing was, ere long, thankful to eat turnip-tops. Government furnished vessels for the transport of food, and established dépôts wherever desired by the Relief Committees, and paid the freight of all food cargoes. A short Act of Parliament authorized the issue of food rations for a specified period, without any condition of work; and, under this Act, the number of persons thus fed amounted, in September, 1847, to upwards of three millions, besides what Relief Committees were doing. It was in the critical interval before the Act was brought into full operation, that the munificent contributions from the United States arrived to save a multitude from destruction. In food, clothing, and money, those contributions were estimated at the value of 150,000*l.*; and they sustained life through the most anxious months of the year,—those preceding harvest. From April to September, the distribution from that source went on.

At first, the ordinary principle of poor-law relief—the working for bread—was enforced as of course; and public works were begun, on funds granted by Parliament. But the principle was inapplicable under the circumstances; the people had no strength for labor; disease was setting in; and the new roads were for years after to be seen, suddenly stopped, and the finished part going to ruin before it was used. Men never full fed in their lives, and ignorant of what hearty toil really was, were in no condition for learning it now. Hence, not only the Public-Works scheme failed, but some of the enterprises of the great Central Committee. They distributed seed; they assisted industrial schools; they supplied boats and nets for fishing in the admirable fishing grounds which surround the coasts of Ireland; they set up model farms, and lent money to promote the growth of flax; they encouraged spade tillage in suitable places, and the preparation of kelp on the shores and islands; they gave their countenance and aid to every scheme of employment which afforded a reasonable prospect of a maintenance for the persons engaged: but, in too many cases, the result was small or nothing, because the people had no heart and no strength for work. The only thing to be done at the moment was to feed the largest number that could by any means be reached; and this was done with an energy and ability which could hardly have been surpassed, and with a success which was therefore, however partial,

as great as could have been expected. Government furnished ten millions of pounds sterling: the poor-houses were thrown open, and were crowded for years after with orphans and others, in whom poverty was no disgrace, because it dated from the famine year.

In February, 1847, sickness began to appear. Dysentery was the first form of it. Then the fever spread, till it seemed as if pestilence would carry off what famine had spared. Those who could, emigrated fast. In 1846, nearly 130,000 persons emigrated; in 1847, above 258,000; in the next year of sickness, fewer; but, in 1849, we find the number little short of 300,000. Those who went out sent home money to bring over their relatives and friends, so that the remittances rose from 460,180*l.* in 1848, to 990,811*l.* in 1851. This mode of escape from the conditions of life in Ireland, when the crisis of the fate of the peasantry arrived, was a great blessing; and not less great, perhaps, was that of the release of the land from trammels which rendered a prosperous agriculture impossible.

A large proportion of the land in Ireland was of no use to any class, from its burdened condition. The owners had mortgaged it to its full value, or beyond it. The titles were questionable to so large an extent that there was no sale for Irish estates. At the same time, the nominal owners had no capital with which to improve the soil; and what the lack of confidence among the capitalists of the country really was, is shown by their investing their money in the Funds in England, at $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent, in preference to lending it in Ireland. Forty millions sterling of Irish capital were thus invested at the time of the famine. The first step towards restoring the fertility of the country was to render sales easy, and the division of estates as practicable as it was desirable. This was done by the Encumbered-Estates Act, passed in 1848, and amended the next year. The owners of such estates crowded to the Court to get rid of enough land to pay off their encumbrances. As the title obtained through this Court was a parliamentary title, never afterwards questionable, there was no lack of purchasers. One of the best symptoms was, that the buyers were chiefly Irish. There were some English and Scotch agriculturalists, who came to settle in the country, to the great advantage of their neighborhood; but there were far more Irish, who took their money out of the funds and the railways and joint-stock banks, to lay it out in improving the soil. When the Queen went to Ireland in 1850, there were some new features in the landscape, among an exaggeration of the old. There were more ruins than ever; ruins of whole hamlets of cottages, and of scattered cabins by thousands,—the former houses of two millions of people who had emigrated, or

died of the fever or the famine. The people were as ragged as ever, so that the Queen and her husband expressed their astonishment that so large a proportion of the rural population should present such an appearance while there was certainly no pressure of distress.

These, and the fields yellow with ragwort, and the very roads rank with weeds, were the old features. The newest was the occasional renovated farmstead showing Scotch thrift or English neatness; or the fresh clearings on the distant hill-side, with its new road, and new dwellings, and new chapel, and new fences to new fields. Another novelty was the way in which the laborers worked. Their wages had doubled, and they were living on a more varied diet; so that they worked with a will. They were still apt to be angry when poor lands were thrown into pasture, in order to the rearing of the stock which is the true natural production of a soil and climate like those of Ireland; but tillage was extending on the whole, and wages were still rising, as emigration steadily disburdened the labor market. The emigration itself had its cheering incidents; for instance, that forty per cent of those who went away were not peasants driven across the Atlantic by eviction or other hardship, but aspirants for the high wages of the manufacturing districts of England and Scotland. The census of 1851 showed this very significant fact.

From the time of the Encumbered-Estates Act coming into operation, the rise of the fortunes of Ireland was unchecked for ten years, though variations in the seasons rendered the rate of progress irregular. A succession of bad seasons came after 1859; but, up to the close of this history, and for five years more, the growth of comfort and welfare was such as to rebuke the old prevalent despair of Ireland. The potato yielded better returns, year by year: two millions of acres were added to the tillage of the country; and the increase of pasture was from lands hitherto waste, or unsuited to grain or roots. The increase in live-stock of every kind was enormous. Agricultural schools were connected with the rural Poor-law Union, and model farms were scattered over the country.

One of the singular circumstances of Ireland had long been, that the subsistence of the working class was earned mainly by the women, and much of the remainder by the children. This arose, at first, from the lower price of women's and children's labor: it went on when the rot was in the fields, and it was continued from habit when the necessity was over. At the end of the peace, the women of Ireland were not only still at work in the fields, but they were in the flax-mills and in the linen manufacture; they were making lace down in the south, they were knitting in the wilds of the west; and everywhere there were

muslin sewers, of whom 400,000 earned from 80,000*l.* to 90,000*l.*, weekly, from the great houses at Belfast and Glasgow.

No rational person needed, by this time, to be told that the miseries of Ireland were unconnected with politics: Crime and coercion. but there are always a good many irrational persons in Ireland; and a season of calamity and irregularity of every kind was sure to be seized by the lawless and the ignorant as a fit occasion for their exploits. In certain districts, the amount of assassination, of robbery for arms, and of incendiarism, was such as to call for the Act of 1847, by which enlarged powers were given to the Viceroy of Ireland; and, by 1848, the spread of sedition, and the open menaces of the clubs which professed to be political, compelled the suspension of the Habeas-Corpus Act,—the measure which O'Connell had pronounced to be the best in cases of disturbance in Ireland, “because it would cure, and not irritate.” The Bill passed through all its stages in one day in the Commons, the day being Saturday; and, on the Monday, in the House of Lords.¹ This was in July. From the opening of the year, the government had been aware that a conspiracy was hatching in Ireland, for the same absurd object as the later Irish disturbances in O'Connell's time, and in a more hopeless way than ever, inasmuch as the leaders were now Protestants. The priests and their flocks were always Rising of 1848. ready to accept of any services from Protestants; but, as leaders, none but Catholics were trusted by the people of Ireland. It mattered little in the present case, because a very small proportion of any class of the people was in favor of the rising. Already the state of the country was improving; the Imperial Government had done great things in the famine time; there was free scope for Irish members in the Imperial Parliament; there was the old difficulty, that, if Irish members accepted any sort of office under government, they were presently distrusted and denounced by the very patriots who were always clamoring for such favors to their countrymen; and it was better to have such discontents aimed at distant London than at a parliament in Dublin. Repeal could not be had; and, if it could, it would be a great calamity: and to agitate it now, when the country was only beginning to rise out of its adversity, was cruel and foolish. Such was the view of the great majority of Irishmen; and a more hopeless, and therefore unpardonable, enterprise than that of Mr. Smith O'Brien and his comrades, was never proposed, in their own country or any other.

After the French revolution of the preceding February, two or three of the agitators had gone to Paris, to solicit aid, in the form of invasion by France, when the Irish rebellion should

¹ Annual Register, 1848, pp. 108, 109.

begin. This was refused; and the conspirators were driven back upon the method of seditious oratory, and the arming of clubs. In the spring, one of their number was convicted of sedition, and another was likely to be so; and this brought the rest to a decision. They would rise in August. It was in order to anticipate this outbreak, and save the lives of the conspirators, as well as bloodshed in the streets, that the Act of July was passed with such singular speed. It was hoped, that, by getting hold of the leaders, their victims might be saved from overt rebellion. It did not altogether answer its purpose, for the rising took place on the 22d of July; but it prevented any grave mischief.

The incidents of the story are painfully absurd, and no purpose can be answered by detailing them. There was haranguing, and dressing up, and drilling, and marching, and barricades, and an announcement that Dublin was up, and that the police and dragoons were put down, and a brandishing of pikes and pistols before police barracks, met by refusals from within to join or to yield. After the government proclamation against Mr. Smith O'Brien was out, the whole action seemed to resolve itself into a siege of a party of police in a stated house in the fields near Ballingarry; and it ended in the capture of Mr. O'Brien in the garden. His conduct was weak and irresolute as a leader, but spirited and quiet in the dock. His life, and that of his co-adjutors, was spared. The lenity was as wise as it was natural, under the existing relations of England and Ireland. Mr. O'Brien had shown by his unconstitutional conduct in Parliament, where he refused to attend to the transaction of any but Irish business, and underwent imprisonment accordingly, that he was lamentably deficient in common sense; and a man suffering under that defect may safely be left to destroy his own influence in his own way. In the same way, the conception of liberty peculiar to Irish agitators is best proved, not by enabling the ignorant to regard them as martyrs, but by leaving it to be tested by events. These leaders were not hanged, but transported. How Mr. O'Brien in exile grumbled, menaced escape, but kept his parole, all the world remembers; and, also, how others of the party broke theirs. They have themselves afforded the most instructive sequel to the Ballingarry rebellion. Mr. O'Brien was permitted to return home, when there was a reasonable certainty that he would do no harm there. He has since travelled, and issued manifestoes whenever he thought proper, and nothing has ensued. So it is with Mr. Mitchel's denunciations of England, and McManus's funeral in Dublin, and every other demonstration that any one of them has thought fit to make. The latest phase of their lives and opinions and influences tells the moral of the story very plainly. Mitchel, a fanatical champion of the

slave power in America ; Meagher, in military command in the service of the North ; O'Brien, issuing his manifesto from Ireland, on behalf of the Confederates and their despotism ; and the Irish in New York slaying negroes in the streets, and rising up against law and order,—these are apt illustrations of the spurious kind of Irish patriotism, which would destroy Ireland by aggravating its weakness, and rejecting the means of recovery and strength.

To return to the period under notice,—at the close of the peace, Ireland was in a more promising condition than perhaps any man of the elder generation had ever ^{Amelioration} and progress. hoped to see. The inevitable retribution for Irish and English political sins and economical mistakes lying far back among the centuries had been endured, and the worst of the pressure was removed. There were above two millions of people less in the country than ten years before. The population had gone back to something below even that of 1821. But, of those departed, the greatest number were living and prospering in Great Britain, or the Colonies, or in the United States. Those who remained were in a rising condition, as was the country itself ; and half a million of children were in the national schools. There must still be checks and vicissitudes, before Ireland could become so cheerful, prosperous, and content as she ought to be ; but the most fearful and fatal obstacles to progress were already cleared away.

CHAPTER II.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S Ministry, which took the place of Sir Robert Peel's, on the 30th of June, 1846, was composed of the Whig elements which were considered rather old and stiff then, but which were, for the most part, plodding on in the same ways, and with the same ideas, nearly twenty years later. All but one or two outlived the peace; and the names of Russell, Grey, Wood, Clarendon, Hobhouse (now Lord Broughton), Palmerston, and Carlisle, are in our London newspapers still from day to day. There was then, as always, a shifting of offices among the great Whig families, but nothing fresher or more original than this; and no expectation waited upon their accession to office, at all proportionate to the public regret at the retirement of Sir Robert Peel.

The first work which the new Ministry had to do, was to release sugar from the burden of duties which could not, in principle, be maintained, after the trade in corn had been made free. There were great embarrassments in dealing with separate items in abolishing the protective system, implicated with each other as they had become by the long practice of an evil policy; and the Navigation Laws rendered it difficult to deal with sugar so freely as was desirable. The measure proposed by ministers was carried, however, by a large majority in the Commons, and a sufficient one in the Lords, notwithstanding a double opposition. Besides the Protectionists, there were the antislavery members of both Houses to be encountered. The majority agreed with the government, that free labor was to be trusted to manifest its economical soundness in competition with slave labor, if the supply was not restricted. This being provided, and the interests of the laboring classes at home duly considered, the right was surely to treat all articles of import on the same principle, without regard to the circumstances of their origin. In fulfilment of the conditions, Lord J. Russell proposed that all facilities should be given to our sugar colonies for obtaining supplies of suitable labor, — Africa alone being forbidden for a labor-market, while negro slavery still ex-

1846-1852.
Lord J. Russell's ministry.
Free-trade.
Finance.
The sugar-duties.

isted, and the slave-trade was encouraged in Cuba and elsewhere.

The sugar-duties were arranged for a course of years, instead of being, as hitherto, annually voted. The large prohibitory and protective duties of 63*s.* and 23*s.* 4*d.*, were reduced to 21*s.*; and the reduction was to proceed, year by year, till the descent to 14*s.* was accomplished, when the further clearance must depend on the fate of the Navigation Laws. The former duties having expired on the 5th of July, a Bill of Renewal was necessary. The renewal for a month did not suffice; and a second was passed, prolonging them to the 5th of September. The Bill completed its course through Parliament on the 17th of August.

The Navigation Laws were to follow before long. The Queen's speech to the new Parliament, towards the close of The Navigation Laws. 1847, recommended the subject of these laws to the Commons; but the time was not ripe: the government measure of 1848 was delayed till it was too late to pass it. In the next session, the free-trade advocates obtained this great measure, by which the carrying trade of the world was thrown open to competition, as far as England's share was concerned. Lord Brougham offered a strenuous opposition on the ground, that free-trade reasons must give way before considerations of self-defence. This, the last refuge of protection, was nearly given up; the repeal was effected under circumstances of great excitement; and the measures came into operation on the first day of the next year.

One reason of the agitation which prevailed was, no doubt, the general perception that other changes were involved in this. The timber-duties must go, because the ship-builders and the merchants must be allowed to enter unburdened on the competition with the merchant-ships of other nations. New securities must be provided for the training of merchant seamen, and the testing of their quality. The shipping interest would be alienated for a time; and foreign competitors would exult. It was generally agreed that the existence of the Ministry depended on the treatment and fate of this measure: the opposition put forth their utmost force; in the Lords they went so far as to renew the debate, contrary to usage, on the third reading; and, when they saw that the case was hopeless, the opposition Peers withdrew in a body, — thus testifying their belief that the supremacy of England in ocean commerce was thrown away. On the night of the last debate, diplomatic personages from almost every foreign country appeared in the House; and it was natural for uneasy patriots to imagine that they came to gaze at a spectacle of national madness. No doubt, there must have been some among those foreigners who believed that a ruinous sacrifice was

being consummated before their eyes. Events corrected the mistake by whomsoever held. The improvement in the construction of ships, in the qualification of seamen, and in the management of commerce, has equalled the highest expectations; and the expansion of trade has far exceeded it. At this day, there is still much to be done in all these ways: but the faults and impediments which remain are the inevitable growth of a system of monopoly; and no evils are in their nature more obstinate and tenacious of life. An illustration of this appeared in the session of 1852, when attempts were made in both Houses, of course in vain, to obtain a promise of retaliatory measures against countries which refused reciprocity of free competition. Such an amount of evidence was elicited of our expanding carrying trade, and of a growing willingness in foreign governments to agree to equal terms with us, that there was nothing for the opposition to do but to withdraw their motion of resistance.

These discussions were the last of any special economical question of primary importance within the period under our notice. There were a few debates,—now on the burdens on land, at the instance of some old corn-law supporters,—now on the sugar-duties, on a basis of narrow and unenlightened anti-slavery sentiment,—and, in the new Parliament of 1852, on the principles of free-trade, which seemed to be called in question in a paragraph of the Queen's speech; but the result was, in every instance, a renewed triumph of the doctrine which had already sound reasons to show for its complete application to every part of the commercial system. Of such occasions, the last was the most important, because the challenge to discussion came from a Ministry which would have renewed some of the old restrictions, on the slightest encouragement. Resolutions, affirming the favorable issue of the change in the principles of trading in corn and other commodities, were moved by Mr. Villiers and Lord Palmerston in the one House, and by Lord Clanricarde in the other, in November and December, 1852; the consequence being an opposition which tested the force of the Protectionists for the last time. The Protectionist champions found their cause lost beyond retrieval. The majority in the Commons was so remarkable that it demands a place in history. The resolution was, “that the improved condition of the country, and especially of the industrious classes, is mainly the result of recent legislation, which has established the principle of unrestricted competition, has abolished taxes imposed for the purposes of protection, and has thereby diminished the cost, and increased the abundance of the principal articles of the food of the people.”

As the same economist principles apply to the distribution of all the necessaries and comforts of life, the whole doctrine of free-

trade was affirmed by the Commons of the British Empire, when 468 members, supporting the resolution, were met by only 53 against it. Here ended the controversy in the leading commercial country of the world; and but a few years more were wanted to bring other European governments a long way on towards the same conclusion.

CHAPTER III.

THE acknowledgments of the prosperity of the country in 1852 had a particular significance from the sore trials through which other countries than Ireland had been passing in the preceding years. In 1847, there was severe commercial distress in England, and a financial panic such as it had been hoped the Bank Act of 1844 would never permit us to see again.¹ The makers of Bank Acts, however, are no more able than other people to foresee changes which will be due to novel and unimagined causes. The railway speculation of 1845 placed the monetary world in a condition, in 1846, which a financier of a former century could not have conceived of. A document exists, which will long remain a monument of the folly to which an old-fashioned public like the people of Great Britain can be excited when a new field of speculation is opened to the gambling propensities which exist everywhere. This document is a return of the names and addresses of the subscribers of less than 2000*l.* to the railway projects of 1845. The names are placed alphabetically; and they fill 540 pages of a Blue Book. The capital provided or promised by subscribers of more than 2000*l.* amounted to 121,500,000*l.*; and about as much was subscribed by the persons, from the highest order of Peers to the humblest of tradesmen, governesses, clerks, and domestic servants, whose names were down for what they could (or could not) afford to invest. That tens of thousands of persons, the bulk of whom could not afford to lose, should have rushed so madly into a gambling kind of speculation was painful; that our railways should be multiplied beyond all chance of success, locking up and wasting a large proportion of the national capital, was vexatious: but all other anxieties were swallowed up for the time in the alarm about what should be done with the money market for a week or two after the day appointed for the deposit of the ten per cent of the subscriptions to the railway projects submitted to Parliament. This proportion of the capital subscribed was, by the standing order, to be paid in to the Accountant-general within seven days of the meeting of Parliament; and

¹ Annual Register, 1852, p. 151.

the question was, what was the world to do while so many millions of pounds sterling, suddenly withdrawn, were lying for at least a week, and probably longer, in the hands of the Accountant-general, to be shed abroad again no less suddenly and capriciously. The lowest estimate of the amount was 10,000,000*l.*; and half of that, snatched from the market, and hid for even the shortest time, would, it was believed, create a monetary panic. Government would not meddle with the established rate; the Bank declined to interfere; the railway companies did not see why they should slacken the process by paying before the necessary day, losing thereby the interest of their money. For a month, the uncertainty was in itself a great evil. On the meeting of Parliament, not only the fortunes of a host of people of all ranks and descriptions were felt to be trembling on the brink of ruin, but the public credit was in a degree of peril which no one could fathom: only the Finance Minister, Mr. Goulburne, relied on the natural operation of demand and supply, and could give no promises of aid of any sort.

On the 7th of February, the lodging of deposits began; and the amount was nearly 11,500,000*l.* More than half, however, was in securities which were merely transferred from the banks to the Accountant-general, to be handed back again when the occasion was past. About five millions were in money; and the market bore this abstraction easily. There was no immediate collapse; and the commercial world breathed again.

The years 1846 and 1847 were, however, years of adversity, keenly felt after the wild glee of speculation which had prevailed in 1845. The commercial depression deepened from month to month, at a time when the misery of Ireland was a sufficient burden for any people and any government to have to bear. In several parts of Europe, there were food riots in the winter of 1846-7; and our own island was not wholly exempt from them. On various points of the Scotch coast, the people seized on the provision-ships, and pillaged them of grain and potatoes. The quiet Belgians rose in riots in the large towns; and, in France, a system of pillage of country houses grew up, which drove the gentry into the cities while it lasted. So many irregular movements, and especially the excess of railway speculation at home, led our financiers and men of business to anticipate a great crisis, and to believe that it could not be far off. They were right; and the autumn of 1847 was the date of a struggle which the commercial world vividly remembers.

Before that time, there was a new Parliament. That there must be one after the repeal of the corn-laws had been universally understood, not only because the present was grow-

ing old, but because so thorough a change of policy required an appeal to the country. As soon, therefore, as the great measures about Ireland were passed,—the grants in aid, the removal of restrictions, and facilities for supplying food,—it was found best to postpone other objects, and wait for a new House of Commons. Parliament was dissolved on the 23d of July.

The election which ensued was characterized at the time as the quietest on record; yet it introduced into public life an unusual proportion of new members. There were few conflicts on specific questions: but old men took the opportunity of a new era in British policy to retire; and men who were deeply pledged, or unchangeably attached to a Protectionist policy, had no inducement to remain. No one of the members, new or old, had any suspicion how soon, and under what necessity, the House would be sitting again. It met on the 18th of November. In

Financial
panic.

September there was a series of commercial failures in London, such as had not been seen or imagined since the great crash of 1825–6. Fifteen of the wealthiest firms in the city failed in the course of the month; and leading provincial firms, stopping payment in consequence, or from the same causes, spread embarrassment and alarm over the whole country. In October the banks began to go; the Bank of England raised its rate of discount rapidly to 9 per cent; the funds fell from day to day; smaller failures attended in troops on the larger ones; and money was scarcely attainable, outside the Bank, on any terms. The ministers long withstood all entreaties to intervene, in an upright reliance on the self-rectifying tendencies of commercial derangements of any kind; and the sponsors of the Bank Act of 1844 sustained the resolution of government with all their influence. But the commercial credit of the country was at last so obviously in extreme danger, that the courage of the boldest gave way; and, on the 25th of October, the Bank received, from the Premier and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a letter of warrant to enlarge the amount of their discounts and advances upon approved security,—the condition being, that a rate of interest should be charged sufficiently high to restrain the issues within the narrowest limits consistent with the public safety. If any violation of the law should take place by means of this permission, ministers would ask Parliament for a Bill of Indemnity. There were some details in the letter, interesting to the Bank directors at the moment, no doubt, but speedily forgotten, as the warrant was never used. The directors immediately passed resolutions in accordance with the permission they had received; and the mere wind of this movement dispersed the tempest which had gathered about their ears. The funds

rose, confidence revived, and the pressure relaxed, so that there was no infringement of the Act. In November, tidings arrived of great failures abroad; and these created another long and heavy list of disasters at home: but the precious metals began to flow into the country; the funds rose, though checked whenever a great house gave way; the Bank's rate of interest declined; and ministers, after an anxious watch upon the Bank reserve from hour to hour for a month, wrote to the directors, withdrawing the license which had never been put to use, and congratulating them on the restoration of confidence. The act was a safe one; and, on the last day of the year, the Bank reserve amounted to above twelve millions. This was a great relief, and everybody was willing to hope the best; but the crisis left behind it a good deal of disappointment and misgiving. The Bank Act, scarcely more than three years old, had not, as was expected, preserved the country from the peril of a commercial crash. It certainly enforced a prudent course in ordinary times; but it had been found an aggravation rather than a safeguard in the hour of the greatest danger. It had been actually necessary to set it aside in the crisis which it should have controlled. Such was the complaint of its opponents, while its advocates pointed out that it had not, after all, been set aside, and that a word of relief to a natural but needless anxiety had sufficed to make all safe. Another time, the commercial world would be wiser, and the true quality and operation of the Act could not be judged till then. The matter was largely discussed Meeting of the new Parliament, November 18. in the new Parliament, soon after its assemblage on the 18th of November; and committees were appointed in both Houses to investigate the causes of the commercial disasters and pressure of the anxious year 1847.

Both before and after this inquiry, there was a general belief, that the chief among many causes of the financial strain was the railway speculation, which had thrown affairs out of their natural course. One hundred and sixty-one millions had been actually expended on this new idol of speculation, and one hundred and thirty-eight millions more were at that moment actually required. Next in importance was the speculation in corn, excited by the bad harvest in 1846, and the famine in Ireland, and then baffled by the plentiful harvest of 1847. Again, there was a deficient supply of cotton; and a depressing anxiety about Ireland weighed on all hearts and deadened the national spirits. Here was quite enough to account for the agitations of the autumn, and for such gloom as overclouded the close of the year.

CHAPTER IV.

BEFORE the commercial embarrassment was over, the political trouble of the impending revolutions had begun to make all the governments of Europe very anxious. Continental agitations, 1848. The occupation of Cracow, in violation of treaty obligations, has been noticed on a preceding page.¹ From that date, — the autumn of 1846, — there had been more and more restlessness in all the discontented parts of Europe; and, at the opening of 1848, even British statesmen must have felt that their arduous work was likely to be more onerous than before.

Another incident belonging to 1846 has been noticed above, — the escape of Prince Louis Napoleon from his prison at Ham.² No man's life was ever more justly forfeited to the laws of his country than his; and it makes all considerate persons aghast to think what consequences have ensued to society and to the course of civilization from the good-nature — the somewhat contemptuous levity — which spared his life. If a tithe of the results had been even dreamed of, France would have pleaded with King Louis Philippe more earnestly for this man's death than ever the life of a patriot or martyr was petitioned for at the footstool of tyrants. It seems now as if there might have been somewhat more forecast about leaving the remotest chance to a Bonaparte of thrusting himself upon France, and scrambling his way to a throne: but the Orleans government were themselves outdone in rashness by the government which succeeded them; and their weak security is made more conspicuous than that of other parties by the particular requital it met with. Louis Napoleon has impressed on the memory of mankind for ever his obligations to the Orleans family for his life, by using his powers as their successor in the government to confiscate their property. It will suffice to describe the second Emperor and his empire to posterity, that he committed high treason by successive overt acts; that, being condemned to death accordingly, he was spared by the King he sought to dethrone; that, escaping from his prison, he returned to Paris on the deposition of the King, and,

¹ *Ante*, p. 463.² *Ante*, p. 480.

after seizing the throne by conspiracy, lawlessness, and murder, employed his first days of power in confiscating the property in France, real and personal, of the whole family of his benefactor.

While he was revolving his schemes and awaiting his opportunity, he was in England, where the universal feeling was at the time, and very reasonably, adverse to the King of the French and some of his family. The ^{Close of the reign of Louis Philippe.} perilous quarrel about Tahiti, detailed in a former page,¹ had been succeeded by the question of the Spanish marriages; and out of this controversy war seemed more likely to arise than at any previous time in the King's reign. War was prevented by the trick which secured the marriage of the Queen of Spain and her sister in the autumn of 1846. It was a striking illustration of the wisdom of iniquity, as accepted by unscrupulous statesmen. The trick succeeded, so far as that the marriages took place, and that war with England was avoided by making it too late to be of any use; but it was a sorry success. No reigning family could ever have got over the singular infamy of the violence done to the girlish Queen of Spain: but the Orleans family did not reign more than a few months after the deed which dishonored them; and the foul air of that deed hung about them wherever they went. After having sacrificed their victim to their scheme of uniting the crowns of France and Spain in their own family, in violation of treaty engagements and the established policy of Europe, they found themselves excluded from all thrones, and all hopes of any; so that the King and his Minister gained nothing by their treachery, and lost such reputation as remained to them after a course of political action which tended to lower the tone of public morality in Europe.

King Louis Philippe had had every advantage for his career of sovereignty. His people were so eager for peace, throughout his reign of eighteen years, that they were ready to forego much, and to endure more, from a ruler who would save them from war. Even their pacific desires, however, might be exaggerated in the estimate; and the King became much too confident in his plans and in his practice. He would listen to no warning that he had gone too far in restricting the electoral liberties of the people, and in subjecting the country to the domination of a host of functionaries, who were devouring its substance, frustrating its liberties, and extinguishing its honor. He had not the blessing of a Minister who would retire from power rather than countenance folly or wrong; and the consequence was inevitable. By the close of 1847, the disgrace from some exposures of of-

¹ *Ante*, p. 473.

ficial corruption, and from some flagrant crimes in the higher ranks of society, being connived at or escaping punishment, had become intolerable to the unsophisticated part of the French public; and signs appeared, that, as on former occasions, the people meant to enforce their demands by showing, that, unless satisfied, they would take their affairs into their own hands.

During the autumn of 1847, Reform Banquets were held in many of the provinces, at which the speakers avowed the intention of Frenchmen to recover the liberties of which they had been steadily deprived, and to require honesty in public functionaries. It is astonishing that the strength of the language used did not inspire some consciousness of danger in the successor of Charles X.: but the Citizen-king trusted in the self-seeking of the money-making trading-class who had prospered under his rule; and he complacently ridiculed the agitators, who would, he insisted, slink away whenever he should think it worth while to frown. So late as the 28th of December, he announced, in his speech to the Chambers, that "the peace of the world was secured," and that "civilization would henceforth advance by means of a good understanding between governments and people."¹ In the very next paragraph, he spoke of the civil wars which had broken out in Switzerland; yet he seemed to be utterly unconscious, that, in the year which was at hand, half the sovereigns of Europe would be flying from their thrones, or remaining under circumstances scarcely more endurable than deposition and exile. In the same confident temper, the King ventured upon a collision with the citizens in Paris itself, on occasion of a proposed Reform Banquet there. He roused the opposition in the Chamber to denounce his ministers, and the people in the streets to carry out their demonstration. From the 19th to the 23d of February, 1848, the agitation rose and spread; and still the King sat chuckling at the reports brought to him of the apparent recession of the people before the authorities; and even the Duchess of Orleans resented a warning from Scheffer, the great artist, that the throne was, or could be, in danger. On the 23d, M. Guizot announced that he and his colleagues had resigned, and that Count Moté had been sent for by the King. It was too late: barricades were at that time rising in the streets; the National Guards evaded all action against the people, and even stood between them and the Municipal Guards; and, later in the evening, M. Guizot's hotel was visited by a crowd well prepared for revolutionary demonstrations. There the actual fighting began; and all Paris saw that it was indeed another revolution. Count Moté could not form a Ministry; and MM. Thiers and

¹ Annual Register, 1847, p. 329.

Odillon Barrot found that theirs could not act. The demand was for a Republic, on the declared ground, that kings had deluded the people too often. The King abdicated in favor of his grandchild, the Comte de Paris; and the Duchess of Orleans appeared in the Chamber to present the child-king and his little brother to the Deputies: but again it was too late. There was no welcome, nor even protection, for them and their claims; and the brave Duchess, who had made the only effort attempted by the royal family in the hour of its fate, led her children away, — away from France, and all it contained for them.

The flight of the King and Queen to England, in winter, and over a rough sea, is a painful story. They were old and forlorn; and there was no grace about their adversity, except, indeed, the devotedness of the aged wife to the husband of her youth. In France, nobody had aided them, beyond hastening their flight; and their own sons had offered a wretched spectacle of helplessness, too strongly contrasted with the tone of defiance of neighboring nations and domestic parties which had issued from among them in their days of greatness and impunity. No one spirited act is recorded of any one of those who were present during those February days. England was their asylum, because it is the common asylum of political fugitives; but there was little comfort to be looked for there. The King of the French had not only offended the Queen, ministers, and people of England, but had lost their esteem and regard; and his sons had, as yet, done nothing to win either. They were received with quiet compassion, and allowed and assisted to make their home among us. In course of time, they somewhat gained upon English sympathies. The Duchess of Orleans was always heartily respected; and the Princes settled down so quietly, and reconciled themselves to their lot so amiably, and with such good sense and manliness, that, year by year (and especially after the death of their father, in 1850), they improved their position in the estimate of the people of England. The process was accelerated by the injuries inflicted on them by the usurper of their place. By confiscating such of their property as he could lay hands on, Louis Napoleon made over to them all his chances of English esteem and interest. And where was he, — Prince Louis Napoleon. that fugitive, not from a throne, but a prison? Where was he while they were following on his track, within two years of his escape from prison? His movements were naturally obscure for a time; but he turns up to political view within six weeks of the arrival among us of the Orleans family, and the aspect under which he appears is that of a special constable in the streets of London. He who was so soon to subvert all order, and drench the streets of Paris with blood, offered his

services to preserve order, and see that the peace was not broken, in the capital of quiet England.

The royal speech in France, in December, had contained announcements of the happy close of a small civil war in Portugal. A civil war was then going on in Switzerland. Spain was disturbed by the strife of factions, and preparing to quarrel with England, which she adventured in the next May, by dismissing Sir Henry Bulwer with contumely. The fault in this case was not altogether with Spain; for it was felt in London, as well as Madrid, that a letter on Spanish affairs, written by Lord Palmerston, and officially communicated by Sir H. Bulwer, was of a sufficiently meddlesome character to account for Sir Henry's unexpected reception of his passports. Our concern here with the incident is merely to show that Spain was under its own condition of agitation in a turbulent time.

In Sardinia, the King, Charles Albert, gave his people a new constitution, with significant hints of what fate had in store for Italy. This was while the revolution in France was going forward. "The time was ripe for greater things," he said; and it was not long before he learned how widely this view was held in Europe. The "cigar riots" at Milan, in the first days of January, when smoking or abstaining was the political demonstration of the hour, had prepared the world for a conflict for the possession of Lombardy; and the first tidings of what was doing in Paris roused the spirit of all Italy, and bade the Austrians prepare for self-defence in their Italian dominions. Early in April, the King of Sardinia and his force had taken up a position between two Austrian armies, and were committed to their fate, — a fate which was decided before the end of the summer, when an armistice concluded, for the present, a struggle which every true Italian intended to renew till his country was made free "from the Alps to the Adriatic," as we have heard so often since. — At the same time, the changes were proceeding at Rome which led the Pope to declare war against Austria, to make and unmake ministers, and at length to escape from his capital in the disguise of a livery servant. — In Sicily, the revolution had been going on for three months; and the King of Naples was for the moment deposed, that a prince of the House of Savoy might take his place as King of Sicily. — In Denmark, King Christian VIII. had died a few weeks before, and those strifes had begun which plunged Denmark and the Duchies in war for years. An insurrection at Kiel had cut off all chance of accommodation till war between the Duchies and Denmark proper had worn a channel for intervention. Then, in 1852, the

Agitation
throughout
Europe.

In Switzer-
land.

In Spain.

In Piedmont.

At Rome.

In Sicily.

In Denmark.

great Powers of Europe on the one part, and Denmark on the other, made a treaty which was to settle finally the succession question, and in it the case of the Duchies. This settlement has proved another illustration of the shortness of the "for ever" of diplomatic arrangements: but this was in the future; and the state of affairs in Denmark, in April, 1848, was as revolutionary as in Paris, at Rome, Milan, or Palermo.—In Holland, ^{In Holland.} the wise King neutralized the effect of revolutionary contagion, by himself proposing, as early as March, a revision of the constitution, by means of which any desirable alterations could be made in a temper of calmness and good-humor.—In Belgium there was also no room for revolution. ^{In Belgium.} In vain did French agitators arrive as soon as the Republic was proclaimed at Paris, to get the same thing done at Brussels, and King Leopold and his wife sent to join their relatives of the Orleans House in England. The Republican party in Belgium was no longer to be found; and nobody would lift a hand or a voice against the constitutional King, who suited the country and the people so well.—In Germany, the case ^{In Germany.} was very different. From side to side, and from end to end, of that great territory, which is always about to become an empire, and never achieves that aim, the hour was believed to have arrived at last. During that year and the next, the people of the various States of Germany had the game in their own hands; but, as is usual with the Germans and their opportunities, they lost it. ^{In Prussia.} In Prussia, the King Frederick William had, a year before, given his people the long-promised constitution, and had found occasion for dispute and menace before the first sitting of the Chamber was closed. Now, when his capital was agitated, like every other in Europe, and vast public meetings in Berlin demanded reforms, he proposed to head the movement for the regeneration of Germany, and changed his Ministry for the purpose. He made himself the popular leader now, in view of being Emperor of Germany by and by; and he traversed the streets of Berlin with the German colors round his arm, and followed by carriages containing Polish prisoners just released. By April, the parade of the new situation was over, and the King was going through the process of trying a succession of ministries, none of whom would remain in his service. In June, Berlin was in disorder, and the arsenal was pillaged by the citizens, who were tired of the superficial emotions, and unstable projects, and deceptive promises of the King; and the day came when the King and Queen had cause for the tears that were always so ready. A shower of balls fired down upon his "beloved Berliners," by his order, laid low a considerable number of them; and the royal pair appeared in the

balcony of their palace to weep for the dead as the carts bore the bodies through the streets. As the Prussian people did not require of their weak ruler what they wanted, but allowed him to break his promises, and revert to his method of paternal despotism, they had more of pity than esteem from the world; and when the citizens muttered, with clenched teeth, "Next time!" the world remarked, that, with the Germans, it was always "next

time." In Vienna, the revolutionary uproar was greater ^{In Austria.} than in any other capital after Paris. Prince Metternich had fled at the time we are contemplating, and was soon to be in England, like so many other wandering magnates. The Emperor Francis and his family presently fled into the Tyrol; and he had entered upon the long course of troubles which darkened his remaining days. The revolt of Hungary was at hand; and the German and Slavonic race were at each other's throats from the moment that "order" was broken up; and the state of Vienna, and the strength of will and power manifested in the revolutionary movements in all the great cities, seemed to show that the system of Metternich was exploded, and had no chance of being ever restored.—The Emperor had rather not reign than either agree to or resist the new conditions; and, before the

^{December 2, 1848.} year was out, he had abdicated in favor of his young nephew, Francis Joseph, whose father gave up his right to the crown on his behalf. On the 8th of the April to which we have arrived, this youth, still in his teens, was made Viceroy of Bohemia, to carry into effect the constitution which was extorted from the Emperor by his subjects in that Kingdom. As in these principal countries of Germany, so in the smaller States, the people were up and doing, for rights long and often promised; and again the Princes promised, after showing, by their whole demeanor, that their concessions were made in sheer terror. Even yet, the Germans were not fit for liberty; for they did not secure it, and put it to use when they might. In a little while, Austria had lapsed into her former condition; the Prussian King was reigning by divine right; and the people of the smaller States were once more, as on former occasions, preaching from the old text, "Put not your trust in princes." There had been some abdications: but the new sovereigns seemed very like the old; and the bitter conviction of good Germans, humbled and indignant, was, that the great revolutionary period of 1848–9 had been, for their race, utterly wasted.

Amidst their own anxieties, all the nations watched with deep ^{In Russia.} interest the course which Russia would take. The secret of Russian weakness had not yet been disclosed; and, where reports of it were whispered, they were believed by few. It was a great satisfaction to the Liberals of all countries

when the Czar Nicholas issued, in March, his declaration of non-interference. He rejected the idea that revolutionary agitations could penetrate Russia, and took up the position of an outside observer of the phenomena of the time. The day was not distant when he would be marching his forces down into Hungary, to do Austria the service of crushing her revolted subjects for her; but at present, in April, 1848, the great voice from eastern Europe was echoing through the western part, declaring that the mighty military power of Russia would not be brought to bear on the strife and struggles of the hour.

This slight review of the political movements of Europe brings us round again to the scene of the re-appearance of Prince Louis Napoleon, after the French throne had ^{In England.} once more become vacant. At that troubled time, he was in the one country which had nothing to fear from revolution. As long as there was any party in England, however, which dreamed and talked of revolution, the actual security could not be asserted to any purpose without clear and decisive evidence; and such evidence was afforded without delay.

The Chartists, who had rioted before, might riot again. From time to time, they spoke or moved on behalf of their impracticable objects; and they showed no sign of ^{The Chartists.} growing wiser, but, by their choice of leaders, rather the contrary. Mr. Feargus O'Connor, sent to Parliament by the Nottingham Chartists, was more mischievous to the followers whom he gathered by means of wild promises, than a man so foolish could have been imagined likely to be. With his political notions, he joined some of the economical dreams which are always enticing to half educated or wholly ignorant people. O'Connell had collected multitudes by promising "fixity of tenure" to every man who desired a bit of land,—every man believing that fixity of tenure meant actual possession of the land held. Feargus O'Connor had a "Land-scheme" of his own, which was to make the fortune of the subscribing members; and the Land-scheme and the Five Points of the Charter were found to work well together in procuring followers, and obtaining any desired amount of demonstration on any occasion.

The spring of 1848 was such an occasion. The Chartists were astir as soon as tidings of revolution began to spread; and they announced their intention of coming to Parliament, in monstrous numbers, to present a monstrous petition on the 10th of April. Considering what had happened in Paris, Vienna, and other capitals, London thought it simple prudence to guard against any tumult on political pretences which the "roughs" of the whole kingdom might create for their own purposes. Government, being in utter uncertainty what to expect, made ample

preparations; and it may be said that the whole body of London citizens were eager to assist in guarding the metropolis, while any amount of aid was ready in the country at a moment's warning. As known precautions hinder mischief, there was little for the police and the citizens to do on the dreaded 10th of April; and, in fact, more mischief was done at several union meetings than on the day of the grand demonstration. Throughout March there were disorderly assemblages on some political pretence or another; while the real agitators were found to be thieves and beggars on the one hand, and ragamuffin boys, pleased at the sport of breaking tradesmen's plate-glass windows, on the other. This kind of training of owners of plate-glass windows to support order contributed much to the imposing appearance of the special constables on the 10th of April.

On the 13th of March, there was a Chartist meeting on Kennington Common, on the south side of London; and, though only a few thousands of people of all sorts were present, and a heavy rain put them to flight at last, more mischief was done to neighboring shops than in the whole line of procession on the 10th of the next month. Two thousand of the police were posted near the Common; and, if these could not prevent the sack-ing of several shops, what could they do, timid people asked, on the grand occasion?

On this grand occasion, the Chartists of England were to meet, The 10th of April. not by delegation, but in their entire numbers, on Kennington Common. They were to be 150,000 in number; and the petition they were to carry to the House of Parliament was to exhibit upwards of five millions of signatures. No thoughtful persons believed that five millions of qualified petitioners to Parliament could be got to sign their names to any demand; but this did not affect the question of the danger from an excited crowd. It was known, that, with the closest packing, Kennington Common would not contain more than 90,000 persons; but the surplus above that number might overflow the whole suburb. So the timid were in fear of a sort of revolution in London, in imitation of those breaking out on the Continent; and the least alarmed considered that no reasonable precaution should be omitted.

In the preceding week, a notice from the government was placarded throughout the metropolitan districts, that, while no obstruction would be offered to any lawful public meeting, the law would be enforced with regard to assemblages met to overawe Parliament. The meeting to petition would not be interfered with, while it was peaceably conducted; but any procession to the House, and any parade of armed men, would be dealt with according to law. The citizens generally were called on to up-

hold the law, and defend the peace of London. The response to this appeal was very remarkable. The government did much for public security, but the public themselves did more.

The Duke of Wellington undertook the systematic defences; and, as the Common lies south of the Thames, the bridges were the points of greatest importance. Bodies of police, mounted and on foot, and companies of special constables, were posted out of sight, but in great force; and strong military supports were within call, not only horse and foot, but artillery. Steamers lay off the Tower, with their steam up, ready to carry ordnance to any point where it might be needed. The Bank of England and other strong edifices were packed with troops and artillery, barricaded, built up with sand-bag parapets, and provided with loopholes for musketry discharges, if necessary. The public offices, both in the city and at the West End, were storehouses of arms; and the officials formed the garrisons, with re-enforcements from without. All these preparations were made so quietly, that few of the citizens were aware of them till some time after the danger was over; but, if the inhabitants were unaware what was hidden under the roofs, they were abundantly impressed by what they saw in the streets. The citizen force of special constables exceeded 170,000. From the Peer to the laborer, every able-bodied resident was ready for the defence of the city and its neighborhood; and, from one end of London to the other, the gentlemen, tradesmen, and artisans were quietly walking up and down the pavements, before the closed shops, when eight o'clock struck. Among these special police was Prince Louis Napoleon, who, within four years, was himself to break up the peace of his own capital, and drench its streets with blood.

The Chartists appeared, as appointed, at nine o'clock, at some half-dozen places of rendezvous, whence they converged to the bridges. The largest body, consisting of about six thousand, passed over London Bridge from the eastern districts of the city; but the main crowd of gazers was attracted by Mr. O'Connor's division of the political army. The so-called "National Convention," which was contained entire in a car, had a very fine car to ride in, and found room in it for the reporters and others who were to attend them. Mr. O'Connor was the chief figure. This car had six horses. It was followed by one with four horses, which contained the monster petition; and both were surrounded by banners, and followed by a marching company of 1700 Chartists. This detachment passed over Blackfriars Bridge, and reached the Common in rather tame spirits, having neither encountered any opposition, nor been greeted in any way whatever. Everybody had gazed at the spectacle, and nobody had had any thing to say to it.

As soon as the assemblage drew together around the cars for business, it was manifest that the meeting was a failure in regard to numbers. Military men, skilled in such computations, were placed in good positions to estimate the numbers for the information of government; and, by their accounts, there was at no moment more than 23,000 persons of all sorts on the Common. From seven to ten thousand more were collected in the roads, gardens, and house-tops within view. The first relief to the public was in this great reduction from the threatened 150,000.

Before the opening of the business, a tall, stout, and good-natured policeman made his way to Mr. O'Connor, and reported the request of the Commissioners of Police, who were at hand, that Mr. O'Connor would favor them with a few minutes' conversation. This was agreed to very readily; but, when the hero of the day and a comrade followed the tall constable, the crowd turned suspicious, shouted that their leaders were deserting them, and made a rush to stop them. Mr. O'Connor, already disheartened by the failure of numbers, turned pale, and never recovered his spirits that day; an incident which first disclosed to some persons, — perhaps to many, — that his brain was unsound. The tall policeman promised that the gentlemen should be back again presently; and they were allowed to pass. The Head Commissioner informed them of the terms of the law, told them what they might and what they might not do, and received their spontaneous pledge that the peace should be kept. Mr. O'Connor offered his hand upon it, and then went to report to the meeting, that there could be no procession to the Houses of Parliament. This had been declared in placards for many days; but the Chartists seem to have disbelieved it till this moment. There was a good deal of disappointment and anger, — some vehement speaking here and there in the crowd, and much questioning about what was to be done next. There was nothing to be done but to send the petition in a legal manner. Three cabs were sent for, and drove away with it for the House of Commons. The bridges, meantime, had been taken possession of by large bodies of police; and all passages into the city refused to the crowd while it continued a crowd. All attempts to force a passage failed; and then the Chartists could do nothing but wait till they could be admitted in parties of ten or twelve. Before four o'clock in the afternoon, they were all out of sight, and the great Chartist demonstration was at an end. Mr. O'Connor was in sore trouble of mind, discontented with his followers, and complaining, with tears, to the authorities of his annoyances in the crowd. As for the rest, the petition was subjected by Parliament to a thorough examination. It weighed, not five tons, but under five hundredweight. The signatures were not five millions,

but about a million and a half; and these were not genuine. The Duke of Wellington's name occurred seventeen times; the Prince Consort's and even the Queen's pretended signature was there, and those of the ministers. There were nicknames, jests, and even indecent terms; and whole sheets were in the same handwriting. The Five Points were not likely to be obtained in such a way as this; and this is, in fact, the closing scene of the Chartist agitation in England.

It may seem strange to have given so many details of so absurd an exhibition; but the spectacle, however absurd, was not insignificant. The proceedings of that day were watched from all parts of Europe; and the result produced as strong an effect on observers as perhaps any one of the revolutions of the time. The peace had been kept without the appearance of a single soldier, and by the citizens themselves re-enforcing the civic police. From that day it was a settled matter, that England was safe from revolution. There were no causes for it,—no elements of it; and there was a steady and cheerful determination, on the part of the people, that there should be none. No sovereign and no polity were ever safer at any time than the Queen and the constitution of England in the revolutionary years of 1848–9.

As for the agitators on that 10th of April, they were no more heard of as Chartists; but they could work honestly and freely towards their objects by petitions to Parliament, by their influence with their constituencies, and by every method of fair discussion. In a few short years more, they learned something, through the experience of other nations, of the value of their great object,—universal suffrage. France first, and other countries since, have shown that universal suffrage is no security for liberty; and that it may be used, and is nearly sure of being used, in monarchical countries, for the repression of liberty. The demand has long been reduced; and the proposal, from whatever quarter, now is of an expansion of the suffrages, gradual, and in some fair proportion to the improving intelligence of the people. The measures of parliamentary reform which were brought forward two or three times during the remain-
Reform of
Parliament.
der of the period under our notice were not carried, except in regard to punishments of electoral offences, as when the ancient borough of St. Albans was disfranchised in 1852, and when, in the same session, the new institution of Commissioners, to be formed on occasion for the pursuing and punishing of bribery and corruption in elections, was created. These two measures afford an illustration of the real advance of the reform cause, slow as is the process of extending the franchise. Both were framed and proposed by Lord John Russell; and both were taken up and carried by his successor in office. Since that date, there have

been other evidences that no party in the State means to oppose the admission of fresh classes to electoral privileges, and that the only dispute now is about the terms and the method. We hear no more of finality on the one hand than of universal suffrage on the other. As for the unhappy man who for some time had such great power for mischief among the least instructed classes of English politicians, he did not long remain upon the scene. He appeared in his place in Parliament when he was entirely unfit to be there; but there seemed to be no one who had a right to control his eccentricities. At length, in 1852, his conduct in the House was so flagrantly insane that he was removed, and committed to a relative, who placed him in the lunatic asylum in which he died in 1855. With this year, which

End of Chart-
ism and Re-
peal.

plunged almost every other country into political confusion, the two controversies which involved disaffection in the United Kingdom died out and disappeared; and both by the same means, — the clear decision of society against the small minority of the discontented. We have seen how it was with Chartism: it was just the same with Repeal in Ireland. Each collapsed finally, in 1848, because the desires of a small and passionate and deluded faction were not to be allowed to disturb the tranquillity of society. Ministers took the first opportunity, however, to extend the suffrage in Ireland, when the emigration had reduced the population so as to admit of an extension without injustice to the existing constituencies. A measure to this purpose became a law in 1850, — less liberal than ministers had proposed, but less impaired than might have been expected from the tone of Irish Conservatism in the House of Lords.

The revolutions abroad left a trace of the times on English legislations in this year 1848, in a temporary Alien Act made necessary by the resort of foreigners to this country, but of a far milder character than the old Alien Acts.

The present measure was directed against agitators, who, unsuccessful at home, were trying the same game over again in England. It was due to our Continental neighbors to save them from conspiracies hatched in England, and to society in England to keep a due control over foreign mischief-makers. Powers were therefore given to government to dismiss from the country aliens against whom good grounds of suspicion could be alleged by the Home Department; while no impediment was put in the way of foreigners who desired to settle and become naturalized in England, or of any who lived harmlessly there.

The other parliamentary efforts and achievements during the life and in the presence of the great retired Minister, who was unquestionably the first man in the Commons and in the country, were not of a character to need any long dis-

Jew Bills.

cussion. Lord John Russell annually tried to obtain admission to Parliament for the Jews; and Baron Rothschild was actually elected, by the city of London, as Lord J. Russell's colleague. But, year by year, the Peers threw out the Bills which had passed the Commons; and, at the close of the peace, the Jews were still outside, though sure of obtaining entrance very soon,—an event which happened in 1858.

Marked advances were made in kindly legislation, meeting with no other opposition than grew out of a wholesome dread of interfering with private arrangements and personal morality by Act of Parliament. ^{Amelioration legislation.} No free Legislature in the world has yet ascertained — much less observed — the proper functions and limits of State action and control; and, in England, there is no point of political philosophy on which further enlightenment and agreement are more urgently required at this hour: but the practical sense of English representatives has kept them, thus far, free from any gross mistakes, even in philanthropic law-making. Their Ten-hours Bills, the beginning they made at this time in improving the condition, training, and prospects of the soldier, and the ever-expanding scheme of popular education, for which larger grants were voted every year, have all done good, and with a smaller admixture of evil than must have accrued if the opposition had not been as honest and intrepid as it was. In the cases of the women and children in factories, as well as in that of the schools, the source of the evil was peculiar; and it required peculiar treatment. The sufferers had to be protected, not so much from the hardness of the employers, as from the rapacity of husbands and fathers, and the tyranny of fellow-workmen. In trades-unions this despotism, of not one class over another, but within the class itself, is still rampant; but, in the Hours-of-labor Acts, the women and children have obtained a great deal of effectual protection; and employers and employed are still (in 1863) seeking to get more and more branches of industry included under the Acts which became law towards the close of the peace.

Meantime, commerce was reviving; Ireland was reviving; political confidence was steady and hopeful; and the only serious drawback was the visitation of cholera in 1849. ^{The cholera in 1849.} The mortality was more serious than ever before, and the alarm nearly as great as if the calamity had been new and unexpected. In September, there was a form of prayer issued, by the Queen's command, to be used in all churches and chapels in the United Kingdom; and, at that time, London was emptying fast. The air was oppressive; ailments of all sorts were rife; and whole streets were known to be swept by the cholera. When all went away who could, those who remained had an im-

pression of doom which was bad for them. It was, therefore, with a sense of surprise that the public heard, in November, of a marked decline of the epidemic. The 15th was made a Thanksgiving Day "for the removal of the grievous disease." In Paris alone, 20,000 died of it; and in London, half empty as it was, nearly 15,000; and in the United Kingdom, not less than 60,000 persons.

CHAPTER V.

DURING the brief remnant of the years of peace, the most stirring events received their impulse from abroad. In the summer of 1850, the Ministry was in a tottering condition; and the continuance of the peace with France seemed even more precarious than it had for some years past, both during the reign of the Citizen-king and since his deposition. The subject was the relations of the moment between England and Greece; but the universal impression was, that, if it had not been that, it would have been some other. The difficulty with the Greek government was, that certain claims which had been admitted on all hands had been urged by England, the Greek government being reminded of its formal and repeated promises of redress still unfulfilled; that the Greek government had, at last, refused the promised redress, with an insolence and bad faith, which, in the opinion of the representatives of England on the spot, required strong admonitory treatment. The British Admiral, having been sent for from the Dardanelles, took up his station off the Piræus, and notified a Greek vessel in the harbor that it would not be allowed to leave till the long-acknowledged claims of England were satisfied. France and Russia, professing to anticipate bombardment following on what they called blockade, offered their mediation. When this point was reached, and before the English public had heard more than general rumors on the subject, London was startled by the news, that, on the Queen's birthday, the French Ambassador had left the country, and that the Russian Ambassador and Bavarian Envoy were nowhere to be seen. Lord Palmerston declared that there was no reason for the French government taking offence; that its mediation had been freely accepted; but that, owing to an obstinate adverse wind, the business at Athens was settled before some essential despatches arrived, — settled, too, on terms more favorable for Greece than the Envoy was commissioned to propose. In Paris, however, the affair was regarded as a slight; and public opinion demanded the recall of M. Drouyn de Lhuys. By the time that discussion in Parliament could be permitted, as

no longer injurious to the public interest, an enormous mass of correspondence had accumulated; and crowds of details had to be studied before any fair judgment could be formed in regard to the conduct of the Foreign Minister, and those who were implicated with him in the matter. Notices were given by the opposition in both houses, of motions which must bring on a vote of confidence in the Ministry, or the reverse. Lord Palmerston was, in fact, on his trial; and, if the verdict went against him, his colleagues, who sustained his policy, must go out with him. In the Lords the majority was no less than 37 against the government. It remained to be seen whether the Commons would contradict the doctrine of that resolution with sufficient emphasis to justify the continuance of the Ministry in office. It was in this debate that the main interest lay; and the most interesting part of it was the speech of Sir R. Peel.

The large question discussed was that of the virtue and sufficiency of the principles on which the international relations of the country had hitherto been conducted: and the debate took this form in consequence of Lord J. Russell's declaration that the present Ministry would continue to act precisely as it had hitherto done; that is, not according to the views of the French or Russian or Bavarian or other statesmen, but according to English views of English honor and obligations. Thus, in every way, the discussion was one of very high importance and vital interest. It extended over four nights, on the last of which Sir R. Peel unconsciously closed his long public life by a speech full of wisdom, dignity, and generous feeling toward the statesmen who were now on their trial. He was compelled to say that the mode of conducting the controversy with Greece had been less forbearing, prudent, and magnanimous than it might have been; and he was unable to assent to the resolution under discussion, because it did not describe the principles it professed to approve, and might be understood to sanction a policy of interference such as it was not fitting for England to adopt. A policy of non-intervention was best for freedom at home, for the liberty and progress of other nations, and for our good understanding with them, and dignity in their eyes. Because such was his view, he could not vote for the resolution which was to absolve the government in the particular case of its transactions with Greece. The majority was 46 for the resolution; and thus the Administration was saved by a vote of confidence of a peculiar kind. It was manifestly not a mere party vote, but quite sincere. Yet Sir R. Peel was in the minority when voting on the ground of non-intervention being the true policy for England, because the fairest and wisest. At this day, when that principle seems to be firmly established among British statesmen of all parties,

the memory of Peel is endeared to us by the recollection of that last utterance of his on its behalf.

The next day, June 29, he had been leaving his name at the Palace, and was pursuing his ride, when his horse — a new purchase — threw him, occasioning fatal internal injury. While he lay dying on the couch on the ground-floor of his house, because he could not bear removal up stairs, crowds of the citizens gathered about the iron gates, waiting in stillness for hours, day and night, for each bulletin as it was handed out. They knew there was no chance ; yet they lingered. Our greatest statesman was passing away, — the man who had done more for England and her people than perhaps remained to be done by any man, living or to come. His early services, in obtaining improvement of the law and a renovation of our police, had been substantial and durable. Then he brought us back from an inconvertible to a sound currency, — adventuring much immediate suffering for others, and much unpopularity for himself, to avert the ultimate bankruptcy which is the natural consequence of a long desertion of cash payments. Again, he rendered the redemption of Ireland possible, and saved us from a fatal rebellion by obtaining the Catholic Emancipation, which Mr. Pitt had virtually promised thirty years before, but had been unable to bestow. Lastly, he had reversed the ignorant and vicious policy of protection to industry, — had sacrificed much and imperilled every thing, to release his countrymen from the ruinous fines, restrictions, and disabilities which afflict all classes under the operation of that system. The country could not but have attained to the light in regard to freedom of trade ; and some statesman would have been found to do the work of emancipation more or less well : but Peel studied the case, as a practical statesman, from his own strong sense of public duty ; and he applied all his powers to do the difficult work in the most thorough and the safest way. Before the full results had had time to appear, the citizens were duly grateful ; for they knew that he had opened a new and bright period to industry, and equal rights in that field. It became known, also, that Sir R. Peel had declined a peerage for himself, and enjoined his family to remain commoners. His eldest son has shown all the world that there might be sound domestic reasons for this decision ; but the quiet dignity of this course, the attachment to the great middle class which it manifested, won the sympathy and admiration of that class. When the news of his death was told to that waiting crowd, they sadly and slowly dispersed to carry the sorrowful tidings home. The royal children did not play that day. They were still and grave, “because Sir Robert Peel was dead ;” and the whole nation was in the mood thus simply expressed. He

was gone, at sixty-four, when we were confidently looking to his mild and generous wisdom for political light and guidance for yet some years to come.

Perhaps the lesson on non-intervention in policy, and respect and courtesy in manner, conveyed by the critical debate just described, might have some connection with the renewal of our diplomatic relations with Spain, which took place some weeks afterward. On the 4th of August, a new ambassador in the place of Sir H. Bulwer, Lord Howden, had an interview with the Queen of Spain, and was graciously received.

In a few weeks more, the government and people had occasion to learn by experience how they themselves relished intervention by a foreign Power, in their domestic arrangements and usages. In the autumn of this year, 1850, the Pope thought proper to change the basis of Catholic administration in Great Britain, and to establish an ecclesiastical hierarchy in this Protestant country. It is not often that Englishmen are stirred to such passion as we witnessed then; and, as usually happens after any outburst of passion, there is some shame mingled with the wonder and amusement with which we may now look back upon the time and circumstances. There can be no doubt that the Queen's wrath and excitement, communicated to her Prime Minister, and by his indiscreet acts disclosed to all the world, had much to do with the popular rage on an occasion so needless. The Queen desired to know whether she was supreme within these realms; and Lord J. Russell fired up at the question, and lost his head in his desire to comfort his Queen. He wrote a letter to the Bishop of Durham, on the 4th of November, which, being published, exasperated the rising passion, and pointed out to popular scorn the High-Church party, whom he accused of having weakened the forces of Protestantism in England. He boasted of our Protestant might, while seeming to believe in danger to the national mind and conscience. For the moment this letter was well received, because it suited the popular mood; but it is an effusion which the writer must have long ago wished to consign to forgetfulness. He felt bound, by his autumnal pledges, to bring forward a measure in the spring, restrictive of the Pope's authority in England; and the Ecclesiastical-Titles Bill was accordingly submitted to Parliament in February. By that time, the assignment of boundaries, dioceses, titles, and functions for Romish religious purposes, was seen to be of no sort of consequence to the Protestant inhabitants of the country. The Romish archbishop and bishops were enthroned with all the pomp and ceremonial they could desire, and nothing came of it. They called one another by the high-sounding and

Reconciliation with Spain.

"Papal aggression."

holy titles of their hierarchy, and nothing came of it. The excitement died away, but the Ministerial Bill must be produced. The ground alleged for it was a fear of the influence that a titled Romish clergy might exercise over Catholic holders of trust property. This looked like an after-thought. The prohibitions proposed were so unworthy of a self-respecting community, the odium of selecting one body of religionists for interdict was so displeasing to English sentiment, and the difficulties and niceties involved were so many and so perplexing, that the credit of the Minister's enterprise declined, day by day. Those who did not disapprove of its introduction complained that the Bill did not go far enough, though English character, principle, and law rendered it impossible to propose a stronger measure. At the end, there was talk on all sides of a mountain and a mouse. Catholics quizzed and evaded it; Protestants blushed at it, and never mentioned it; and indifferentists pointed out the irrepressible nature of religious animosity, which rises up in every age, under every variety of circumstances, to show the foremost nations of mankind, how, in this department of experience, they grow wise very slowly, if at all.

The Bill was very long on hand,—occupied four nights at one time, and seven at another, and waited during a suspension of the Ministry,—was hung all over with amendments, and was the sport of some strange mistakes. At length, after an enormous waste of time, temper, and the dignity of Parliament, and the preclusion of almost all other legislation of that session, it passed, and became the law of the land. This, as far as appears, was the last that ever was heard of it. The Romish clergy have followed their own devices; have been known in their homes and churches by what names they please; and have been plain, harmless Englishmen, all the while, to the rest of the world.

CHAPTER VI.

It has been mentioned that there was a suspension of the Ministry during the discussion of the Ecclesiastical-Titles Bill. It was that Bill which was chiefly responsible for the breaking-up of the government, and which prevented the construction of two or three attempted Administrations, so that Lord J. Russell resumed his position, with only two or three changes among his colleagues. All this disturbance, and the loss of the session of 1851 for any valuable practical purposes, may be ascribed to influences from abroad. The next great agitation was more immediately referable to movements on the continent.

The condition of France had caused increasing anxiety among her neighbors, as year after year passed on without any promise of a constitutional settlement which would restore confidence and tranquillity. This is not the place to record all the changes that occurred between the beginning of 1848 and the close of 1851. It is enough to say, that the republican interval was troubled by warring opinions, and conflicts for power, which were themselves but proofs how feeble and untrained was the republican principle; or, too often, the mere disguise of communistic movements and plans, so alarming to certain classes of the citizens as to render them slaves in advance to any leader or usurper who would engage for the preservation of order and property. It was not likely that such a political adventurer as Prince Louis Napoleon would fail to make the most of a situation which he was believed to have some satisfaction in witnessing, — as a general has in surveying the field on which his next battle is to be fought. This suspicion of the intentions of the returned outcast, who had got into the highest seat in the Republic, was not gratuitous. He dropped sayings, on occasion, which created an apprehension that another revolution was at hand. In the autumn of 1851, for instance, he said a few words to some officers of regiments just arrived in Paris, which chilled many hearts with fear. He expressed a strong conviction that he might rely on the services of the soldiery in case of any grave necessity arising, because he had put into the higher commands men who had his entire confi-

Political
changes in
France.

dence; because he should require only what the welfare of France demanded; and because he would himself lead, and not follow, as preceding governments had done. "I will not say to you, 'March, and I will follow you;' but I will say to you, 'I march: follow me.'"

After repeated oracular utterances like this, the *coup d'état* of December 2 could take no reasonable persons by surprise. Nor in a Bonaparte, and in an adventurer so well known as Prince Louis Napoleon, could any amount of unscrupulous words, and selfish, cruel, and treacherous deeds, be at all astonishing to outside observers. The suppression of the Legislature, the arrest of every eminent man in political life, the subjection of Paris to the military, and the slaughter in the streets of hundreds of harmless persons of all ages and callings,—and all this without the occurrence of any crisis demanding immediate action,—created great horror in England, as in every free country. When these first violences were followed by the audacious subversion of all citizen liberties; when the prisons were crowded with innocent and virtuous men, and many good patriots were sent to Cayenne without trial, to bear the punishment of the lowest convicts,—every sound Englishman began to look upon the French usurper as his own personal enemy, because he was the destroyer of the very function of citizenship. While a few elderly statesmen com-
Prince Napoleon's usurpation.
 plained of the uncereemonious way in which the con-
Effects in England.
 dition of France and the acts of the French ruler were spoken of, the newspapers were a very faithful expression of the general feeling. The course of the government was plain enough.
Course of the government.
 It had only to follow its unvarying practice of recognizing all *de facto* governments in foreign countries. The Duke of Wellington had had to do this hard duty, when the Bourbons were chased away, and the Citizen-king succeeded them; and now Lord J. Russell's Cabinet had no choice but to acknowledge the new rule in France, which, like every other, must be supposed to have the assent of the nation. If France did not disown her ruler, no other country could disown him. While accepting his rule, France was not then, and is not now, respected and sympathized with as in the days of her struggles to gain and to preserve liberty; but her decision must be received by all her neighbors. She at once and permanently acquiesced in the despotic government of the adventurer who at last succeeded in making himself emperor; and her acquiescence not only determined that of surrounding nations, but caused some distrust of the instincts and judgment of the English people in the minds of some few public men, and, no doubt, of the Queen herself for a time. It seemed incredible that all France should submit to a man of

whom such things could be truly said. The earnest desire and steady purpose to preserve a complete neutrality, however, caused the removal of Lord Palmerston from office before the opening of the session of 1852. For some time there had been discontent with him in the highest quarter for certain rather insolent acts of carelessness in his official transactions with the Queen. It was hoped that reproof would have sufficed to keep so able a Minister within bounds; but he transgressed past endurance, when he, a member of the government, actually took upon him to congratulate the usurper on the success of his conspiracy. This act was the reason for Lord Palmerston's retirement, assigned by the ministers in Parliament, early in February. The country was prosperous and contented, when this blow to the liberties of France shocked all good citizens everywhere. There never was a moment's doubt that the conspirator would make himself emperor; there was little hope that a good understanding could long exist between England and the France which let a Bonaparte set his foot upon her neck; but there was no such reticence on this account as timid politicians prayed for. This was the moment which began the real preparation of England for war, whenever war must be declared. The volunteer movement, though faintly and fitfully proposed, was not yet ripe. It waited for another alarm from France, a few years later. The low condition of our navy, though grumbled at on occasion, was not yet taken to heart. But the complete uncertainty, which could not but exist for a time, as to the probability of peace or war with France, had a wholesome effect in rousing the national sense, as well as spirit. The elder generations spoke out once more as to the effect of a long peace on the moral and physical training of the men of the time. They told how, in their early days, there was a sensitiveness about national and civic liberty, which had ceased to be prevalent or evident. There used to be a generous carelessness of means, and of ease and quiet, when daily sacrifices were required by war; whereas now even young men were afraid that this or that procedure—as a volunteer force, for instance—would do harm; and were disposed to think that it was prudent and right to be silent on the doings of any successful scoundrel, rather than run any risk of provoking war. In short, the patriotic spirit, which, in time of war, finds exercise in sacrifice, and exalts the mood of the whole mind, had not yet come within the experience of the active generation. There was no lack of patriotism; but it moved in other directions, and showed itself in other forms. The needful change now began. There never would be any security against invasion while a Bonaparte was on the throne of France: people began to imagine what inva-

Lord Palmerston's retirement.

Feeling of the people.

sion must be like, and how it ought to be met: old stories of the last war came up again. All this inspired panic in some quarters, and created a sordid alarm about trade. To this, it may be hoped, the adulation may be ascribed, which was offered to the new Emperor by certain merchants of London, as well as by individual Englishmen at Paris, who spoke no opinion but their own. It was with no satisfaction that the people saw the Emperor, after his marriage, invited with his bride to be the guest of their Queen; or that they saw her go to return the visit in the capital where such crimes had been perpetrated in the process of turning an adventurer into an emperor. On the whole, the effect was to set the people thinking and feeling in a new way. Such ostentatious civilities were not honest; no good could come of them: the danger still existed, and must exist, while a ruler of such a cast of character was the nearest neighbor of England. He must, from the perils of his own position, make war; and, if not with England, England might be dragged into a European quarrel. The sense of security was gone, and the right thing to be done was to revive the military life of the nation. The ministerial measures reflected something of the popular mind when the Militia Bill was brought in by Lord J. Russell, and some additions were made to the army. Only five thousand troops were added: but this was enough to show that the defences of the country were in course of revision; and the strong expressions of the ministers about the necessity of some such domestic force as the militia they proposed to revive, disclosed their sense of a critical period having been entered on. They constantly insisted that they had no particular reason for taking precautions at the present time; but everybody understood what they were feeling, and why. Lord Palmerston put forth his power and influence against the measure of his late colleagues, and secured the throwing-out of the Militia Bill; and Lord J. Russell, enfeebled by the changes which had taken place in his Cabinet, retired from office.

Lord Derby, with Mr. Disraeli for his Chancellor of the Exchequer, succeeded to power, and made his exposition of policy on the 27th of February. Another Militia Bill was the first great measure of the new government, and it was carried by large majorities. It was on this occasion that the Duke of Wellington was last heard at any length in Parliament. All were eager to hear what he had to say on the defences of the country, though he had never made any secret of his opinion that they were fearfully deficient. He said now that England had never had a proper peace establishment,—one which would serve as a basis for a war force; and now the thing must be done all at once, at the risk of giving offence abroad, and

Change of
Ministry,
February,
1852.

creating misapprehension as to the national intentions. He advised an immediate formation of a complete peace establishment; "and then," he said, "you can consider what you will do next." He told what the British militia was like during the first ten years of the century, — a body of from 50,000 to 80,000 of as well-trained troops as were ever charged with the defence of any country; and he expressed his confidence that a no less fine domestic army might be raised again, however long the peace had lasted; but it would take a considerable time, and it had been put off too long. The old General was cheered throughout his speech, and at the end of it; and no doubt these last few months of his life were the happier for the country being roused, at last, to think of war as an actual possibility, instead of being content to dream that the age of wars was over, till overwhelmed by invasion, or a sudden call to a foreign battle-field. The Duke of Wellington died on the 14th of the next September; and, on the 6th of December following, the Earl of Malmsbury, Foreign Secretary in Lord Derby's Cabinet, announced in the House of Lords the news which the old Duke and most other people had been looking for as a warning to prepare for war. The usurper of the office now called himself by the name of Emperor of France. The president of the Republic was now Napoleon the Third. There was the usual pretence of a popular vote: but the working of universal suffrage, under the management of his agents, was pretty well understood by this time; and, when the world heard of a French Empire again, it saw what was coming, — a period of French history in which the people would be stripped of their liberties, and served, in their stead, with coaxings and flatteries, and promises of glory in wars for which they must furnish the men and the money without having any option about going into them. Such was the prevalent view in England, as elsewhere; but Lord Malmsbury regarded the matter differently. Whatever were the reasons for the adulatory tone of his speech in announcing the second Empire, it was highly offensive to Englishmen generally, and therefore fatal to his continuance in such an office as that of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In the Commons, the announcement of the Prince President having assumed the title of Napoleon the Third was made by Mr. Disraeli, in the fewest words, and received without comment.

One effect of the dubious state of our foreign relations was, that domestic politics worked smoothly and easily. In the first session of the Derby Administration, short as it was, several measures of great value were passed with facility. Most of these measures had been prepared by the preceding Ministry, as was admitted on all hands; and there was a remark-

Measures
passed.

able subsidence of party spirit during that year of anxious vigilance: but the Derby Ministry also manifested great ability on the whole, miserable as was the failure of Lord Malmsbury in the department of foreign affairs. It gave us the Militia Act in the first place; it conferred a constitution on New Zealand; it abolished the office of Masters in Chancery, thus sweeping away some of the worst grievances of that court, and made important reforms in the procedure of other courts. It promoted sanitary improvements in many ways, and especially by putting a stop to burial in churches and city churchyards, and improving the supply of water to London. Yet it was thought necessary that the new Ministry should have a new Parliament; and the prorogation and dissolution took place in July, in New Parliament. order that the Houses might meet early in November, and have a short session before Christmas.

By Christmas, however, the Derby Ministry was out. It had taken its stand on its financial scheme; but the budget brought forward by Mr. Disraeli on the 3d of December so ill satisfied the new Parliament, that the vote on the budget left the government in a minority of 19. Such a result, after an appeal to the country, and in regard to the vital measure of the Ministry, left Lord Derby and his colleagues no choice but to resign, which they did immediately. The adverse vote had been taken at four in the morning of the 17th of December; and, a few hours after, Lord Derby was on his way to Osborne, to offer the resignation of the Cabinet to the Queen. Derby Ministry at an end.

The Premiership was now proposed to Lord Aberdeen, who accepted it, and formed a Cabinet of well-tried Whigs and immediate followers of Sir R. Peel. In the state of their minds at that time, Lords J. Russell and Palmerston could not take office, — either of them under the Premiership of the other; but they could enter the same Cabinet on equal terms. Lord Palmerston took the Home Office, and Lord J. Russell the Foreign Affairs. So distinguished an assemblage of colleagues would have commanded interest at any time; but the memorable peculiarity belonged to Lord Aberdeen's Ministry, that the long peace expired under its charge. With the one change of Lord Clarendon superseding Lord J. Russell as Foreign Secretary (the latter remaining in the Cabinet, as Lord Landsdowne did, without office), this was the Administration which carried the country into the Russian war. Lord Aberdeen's Ministry, Christmas, 1852.

This Ministry has never been made accountable for the war; and, if such a charge had been attempted, its members, one and all, could have given a good answer. The only way in which such a responsibility can be lodged with them is by saying that Lord Aberdeen's notorious horror of war encouraged the Emperor

of Russia to believe that he might, with impunity, go greater lengths against the liberties and peace of Europe than could, in fact, be permitted. It is probable that this was the truth; but it does not make the government, or any part of it, responsible for the war. To decline the task of checking and punishing the Czar amidst his aggressions on countries and peoples whom the Western Powers were bound to protect, would have been a dishonor, the mere idea of which could not have been tolerated for a moment. The government had the full and clear and hearty support of the nation throughout, — strong as was the attachment of the people to peace, and great as was their interest in it. The country was in a state of high prosperity at the close of 1852, when Lord Aberdeen and his colleagues came into office; and that prosperity made no difference in the popular readiness to do the duty of England in the Eastern question. Not only was food cheap, but commerce was brisk and extending. Yet these blessings of peace were held subject to the conditions of international obligation. Then came the other test. Times grew dark as the new year advanced; and there was first the fear, and then the reality, of a bad harvest, — not only at home, but throughout Europe. The country was afflicted, in the autumn of 1853, with one of the sorest visitations of gratuitous trouble, known by the name of “strikes,” ever experienced since the time arrived when the working-men of England should have been wiser. The mischief, the useless suffering, and the shocking waste of numerous, severe, and protracted strikes, made the close of the year very dreary; but no such reverses affected the spirit and resolution of the country in regard to resisting the aggressions of Russia. The strongest evidence of the genuineness of the prevalent sentiment and conviction was perhaps the utter helplessness of the so-called Peace party. The one thing that they really effected was precipitating the war by misleading the Czar in regard to public opinion at home. A trio of these self-constituted mediators went to St. Petersburg, and read a sermon to the head of the one exclusively military nation in Christendom, on the duty of a pacific settlement of a quarrel which was itself nothing else than a scheme of his to seize and dismember a weak and harmless State. The eagerness of self-defence evident in the Czar’s reply astonished at first all who read it, as much as his adroit flattery of his Quaker visitors amused them; but time, at length, disclosed the mischief these well-meaning meddlers had done. Between Lord Aberdeen’s avowed horror of war (due mainly to his having witnessed the battle of Leipzig with civilian eyes) and a popular embassy, as he took the Quaker visit to be, the Czar felt assured that England would under no circumstances go to war with

Approach of
war.

Delusions of
the Czar.

him; and, but for this false conclusion, he might, and probably would, have drawn back in time. There is no saying what autocrats will do under any given circumstances. Their judgment is not open to the cross-lights which clear up the views of men less isolated; and folly, bringing on ruin, has been the common ending of the career of despots of the rankest order. Thus the Czar Nicholas might possibly have played his part no less perversely if the Premier had been a soldier, and no Quaker had ever accosted him; but any tendencies that he had to overbear the East and defy the West were unquestionably encouraged by the false appearance presented to him of the English way of viewing things. These peace-orators could safely prove that war cost a vast expenditure of blood and treasure; but the people of England are apt to think that there are things of higher value than blood and treasure. The Czar thought the same thing in his own way: he perceived that the peace-preachers did not; and, instead of asking anybody whether the people of England agreed with him or them, he assumed that his strange visitors were real representatives of their nation. If he had duly inquired, and had found that they had absolutely *no* popular following or influence at home, and also that Lord Aberdeen would make war whenever it behooved the Prime Minister of England to do so, he might have deferred his enterprise of destroying Turkey, and making Russia a Mediterranean power.

There was another delusion in his mind however. It was a fixed idea of his that England and France could never be allies, or enter upon any common enterprise. Judging by the past, he considered it the primary condition of European politics that the two great Western nations should be in antagonism. When he discovered that these two nations were well disposed to an alliance, he believed that he saw further than either of them in pronouncing durable and effectual co-operation between them to be impossible. He was, in truth, a very ignorant man,—we might say strangely ignorant, but that we know how little access there is to the mind of an autocrat. His ignorance laid him open to the misleadings of men and appearances; and those misleadings excited to full action a self-will so dominant as to be, in itself, a kind of insanity. These notions and this obstinacy worked together in the direction of the policy prescribed by Peter the Great,—the policy of encroaching more and more in Europe, so as to obtain the first place on that continent, if not the control of it. Thus was the spoiled child of despotism drawn on to die of a broken heart, and to learn the helplessness of his great military empire,—such helplessness, that, in the war he created, his forces never once gained the victory in any encounter, even over the Turks. He found that his troops could

make a stand only behind defences. He knew that his empire was drained of its resources by this war, which he had intended to be short and triumphant, and rich in extension of territory. He found himself deceived on every hand by his own servants; robbed by officials, civil and military; and made the murderer of his own soldiers by their being killed off by hunger and neglect, inflicted by men whom he had appointed, on the expeditions which he had decreed. He found that England and France were really and truly combined against him, and that the English were no more Quaker-like or tradesman-like than the French. When the decision rested with them what was to be done, they pronounced for war, for the preservation of Turkey, and of the balance of power in Europe; and they went into the war with one heart and one soul. These discoveries were the death of him. Yet his delusions were not altogether a misfortune to his empire and to the world. The earlier some mistakes are exposed, the better for everybody; and one of those mistakes is the supposition that any people can be a great military nation without a social organization which requires ordinary honesty, intelligence, and personal freedom. The Crimean war exhausted and humbled Russia, stopped her course of policy, and lowered her position in Europe: but all this had to be done some day; and the longer it was deferred, the worse for Russia. The fate of the Empire is now, ten years later, trembling in the balance; and it will long be uncertain whether it can recover from the losses of substance, name, and fame, through that war, and from the natural retribution which always overtakes oppressors and rapacious aggressors; but the speed of the retribution in this case, owing to the obstinacy of the Czar Nicholas has perhaps left some chances of escape from the destruction which, after a longer delay, would have been the absolute doom of Russia.

There were other blessings resulting from the war, — the new spirit infused into the Turks, and the dignity which was the natural reward of their gallant self-defence; the introduction of Piedmont into an alliance of the first rank, and a share in a great European war; the opportunity afforded to England of testing the vitality and force of her military quality, and of reforming her war-administration; the occupation of the French in a great and good enterprise at a time when they might otherwise have avenged their political disappointment by struggles useless in the presence of a subservient army, and simply exhausting to the wronged and cheated party; and, in all the cases, the great benefit of enlistment in a generous cause, and the satisfaction of sacrificing and suffering for good on the largest scale. To treat of these blessings in each case belongs to the historian of the war, — not of the preceding peace. It is more in the

way of the latter to inquire how it was that England and France entered into that alliance which the Russian czars have considered to be an established impossibility.

Protestant England had nothing to do with the quarrels between the Greek and Latin Churches, represented by Russia and France, about the Holy Places; but it was her business to see that Turkey was not torn to pieces in the struggle between these wrangling Christians. In February, 1853, the crisis arrived which showed the danger of the Porte. It was then that the British Ambassador was on his way back to Constantinople, charged with special instructions; and that the Russian Ambassador, Prince Menschikoff, arrived there, — showing immediately that his chief commission was to insult the government of the Porte, so as to leave no escape from a war. The French government was so irritated as to send the Toulon squadron to the mouth of the Dardanelles. The English admiral at Malta, being asked by the British Chargé d’Affaires, during the absence of the Ambassador, to bring his squadron also to the Dardanelles, very properly refused, as there was not yet a clear necessity for such an act. By this time it was the end of March; and not a day had been lost by Prince Menschikoff, while the English Envoy, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, was still absent in trying to induce the Sultan’s government to sign a treaty with Russia, without the knowledge of the English and French Ambassadors. This treaty would have deprived the Turks of their independence, and rendered their State the mere vassal of Russia. The Sultan’s ministers refused to sign this treaty before consulting with England and France. Then it became evident that force would be used, if persuasion first, then intimidation, failed; and the Powers which had guaranteed the integrity of the Turkish State perceived that they were likely to be called upon for the fulfilment of their engagements. The questions about the Holy Places had been settled; but still the Sultan was pressed to grant to Russia a power of interference with his subjects of the Greek faith, altogether incompatible with the independence of a sovereign State. Supported by British and French counsels, the Sultan’s government declined the fatal concession; and at once Prince Menschikoff quitted Constantinople, followed by the whole Russian legation. It was no surprise to anybody that Russian troops were soon gathering in great force on the frontier. The Sultan communicated this fact to the European Courts; and, from that time (the end of May), no one of them had any excuse for delay in resolving what part to take when the armies of the Czar were sent to subjugate Turkey.

It is probable that no government in Europe was surprised at

the diplomatic insolence and military menaces of Russia; but the English Ministry certainly was not. At the beginning of the year, the Czar had confidently invited the Queen and her ministers to form an agreement with him as to how Turkey should be distributed when its weakness should have compelled its dissolution as an independent Power. He had the whole scheme in his head, avowedly because he had meditated it for years. No other Power should possess Constantinople; and he himself would not possess, but only occupy it; and so on. In order to prevent strife and confusion, he desired to make complete arrangements with England while "the sick man was yet living," about the disposal of his effects on his death. The English reply was the only one which it was possible for an English government to make,—that there was no reason to suppose there was any "sick man" in the case; that to look out and arrange for the death of anybody still alive and active, was the most likely way to cause the death; that England had nothing to gain and nothing to desire by the extinction of Turkey; and that her strongest wish was to promote the vigor and long life of that State. The Czar professed to desire the same thing, but to see that it was impracticable; and then transpired one of the strangest facts of the whole disclosure. The English answer had deprecated any consultation of the sort, and, among other reasons, had observed on the insult and injury such a discussion must be in the eyes of the Sultan, if he should hear of it; and he could scarcely fail to hear of it, while there were other Powers, and especially Austria, who had a right to be admitted to any consultation on the destinies of Turkey. On this the Czar, in conversation with Sir Hamilton Seymour, the admirable representative of the English government at St. Petersburg, lightly observed, that he had been speaking for Austria as well as himself, as Austria and he were one. In following up the discussion, which he was disinclined to drop, the Emperor declared himself discontented with France and her peremptoriness about the Latin claims to the Holy Places, and insisted, that, as a fatal attack on Turkey might take place at any moment, no day could be too early for an agreement between Russia, Austria, and England, as to what encroachments they would refuse to permit when the Turkish dominion shall be broken up. At this time, Lord Clarendon succeeded to Lord J. Russell at the Foreign Office, and his despatches were in entire consistency with what had gone before. Turkey was living, and likely to live: any preparations for her decease would only excite intrigues, and cause embroilments: if the catastrophe should happen, events would show what ought to be done; and, if a European Congress should have to be called on the dissolution of one of the States

of Europe, it would be a grave misfortune that any of the other Powers should be discovered to have anticipated that body in consultation and decision. The discussion ended, in the middle of April, by the Czar intimating to Sir Hamilton Seymour, that, in all he had said, he had spoken for his successor as well as himself, as he should leave instructions which would be binding on the next occupant of his throne.

The gathering of Russian troops on the frontiers of Turkey during the month after this correspondence closed, and the way in which a quarrel was fastened on the Porte by Prince Menschikoff, could be no surprise to the English government; and the rest of the world was enlightened by the publication of a circular note of Count Nesselrode's, in which the Czar's complaints of the Sultan's government were embodied. This note also declared that Russian troops would, in a few weeks, cross the frontier and occupy the Principalities, not to wage war, but to obtain "material guarantees" for the fulfilment of the Czar's demands. The note bore the date of the 31st of May; and, on the 2d and 3d of July, two divisions of the Russian army crossed the Pruth, and there could be no rational doubt that ^{Invasion by Russia.} war was now inevitable. Little did the aggressor imagine, during those midsummer days, that the military force for which he had sacrificed the progress of his empire in every other direction would be unable to hold its ground, even against the Turks; and that he was bringing on himself, his successor, and his people, mere humiliation and exhaustion by the war which he was intruding on the long peace of Europe.

Nothing was gained by what is called the Vienna Note, agreed to by the four great Powers, England, France, Austria, and Prussia, to control and reconcile Russia and Turkey; for parts of the note were susceptible of two widely different interpretations: and that Russia at once accepted it was a sufficient reason for the Porte's first suspecting, and then refusing it, unless those portions were modified which Russia would not allow to be touched.

One last opportunity was afforded to Russia to withdraw. As the dominions of the Porte were actually invaded and ^{Beginning of the war.} occupied, the next inevitable step was to declare war, unless the intrusive forces should withdraw. The Porte issued its manifesto on the 5th of October. The Turkish commander-in-chief, Omar Pasha, sent it to the Russian general, Prince Gortschakoff, offering him fifteen days to evacuate the Turkish territory. The Sultan appealed to the English and French commanders of the Mediterranean squadrons, then lying in Besika Bay, to enter the Dardanelles; and they entered the Straits on the 14th of October. The alternative now before the Czar was

to withdraw his army of occupation or to declare war. He was, no doubt, disappointed at finding no countenance for his proceedings, but disapprobation on every hand; but his pride was a true monomania, and he could not yield while the eyes of all Europe were upon him. He still considered it wholly incredible that England and France should act in conjunction, and that any power could withstand his arms. So he issued, on the 1st of November, his declaration of war, and the peace of Europe was broken. The battle of Oltenitza was fought on the 4th of November; and with this defeat began the long series of Russian humiliations.

The great Powers, consulting at Vienna, still strove to reconcile the belligerents; and the Turkish government was ready to treat, through those Powers: but, on the 30th of November, the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Sinope, by an attack from the naval force from Sebastopol, extinguished the last hope. The Czar had chosen to preclude all dispute as to the war being his own act from beginning to end; and now it only remained to make him take the consequences. The first effect on him was to cause a proclamation of his "hearty joy" at what had been done "on behalf of the honor and glory of Russia," by the surprise of the Turkish ships, and the slaughter of four thousand men of their crews at Sinope.

The English Minister at St. Petersburg was at once desired to make the Emperor understand that the conciliatory tone and friendly offices of England and France, for six months past, were no signs of indifference to the treatment the Porte had received; and that their ships would take care that the Russian fleet did no more damage in the Black Sea. From that time, the navy of the Czar was shut up in the harbor of Sebastopol. The Turks had no naval means of offence left.

On the 30th of January following, the Queen, on opening the session of Parliament, announced that her government and that of France would not relax in their efforts to restore peace and obtain just treatment for Turkey, unsuccessful as their endeavors had hitherto been; but that it was necessary to augment the forces of the kingdom, both by sea and land. Both Houses were of that opinion, and so was the nation. Nothing was talked of in Parliament and the country but the Eastern question. The Czar had given his instructions to his ambassador, Baron Brunnow, to obtain satisfactory explanations about the threat of preventing the egress of Russian ships from their ports in the Black Sea, or to leave London. In the beginning of February he quitted London; and, on the 7th, Lord Clarendon sent instructions to Sir Hamilton Seymour to leave St. Peters-

Diplomatic
rupture
between
Russia and
the Western
Powers.

1854.

burg. While still corresponding, the Czar went on levying troops, on the ground that the Western Powers were siding with the enemies of Christianity. In order to save Turkey from conquest and partition, the protecting Powers must interfere now, if at all. Already the people of England and France were in advance of their governments, in a generous enthusiasm on behalf of the weak party in a case where the stronger was the aggressor. On the 27th of March, a declaration of war was issued in London and Paris. In the preceding August, a great sensation was excited among our allies, as well as at home, by the review of the British fleet at Spithead by the Queen; and such a naval display probably never was witnessed before. The Queen was, perhaps, never so popular as at the moment when her steamer, having accompanied the fleet on its course, paused after turning, while the farewell wave of her handkerchief was greeted with cheers from the whole body of her gallant seamen. In the same spirit her people now greeted the Guards, and every regiment which marched through London or Portsmouth. The citizens marched with them to the water's edge, and loaded them with gifts and blessings. The best part of the war-spirit was up again in a generation which had never seen war. It was a war accepted on behalf of a good cause, and there could scarcely have been a better or more natural close to the forty years' peace.

CHAPTER VII.

WHILE political troubles were perplexing Europe from end to end, some events of deep interest were happening in the United States. The interest was, in particular instances, exceedingly melancholy; for the spirit of the Southern slave-power was ruling at Washington, and only too active elsewhere. The war with Mexico astonished that part of the world which did not understand that slavery brings after it both the lust and the need of fresh territory, and grieved the rest by such a proof of the domination of the Southern States in the Union. No adequate cause for the Mexican war appeared to anybody outside of the United States; and nothing had happened yet which so lowered the Republic in the eyes of the older nations. Then, in 1850, followed Lopez's invasion of Cuba, — a filibustering expedition in which the adventurer was attended by several hundred citizens of the United States, after organizing his scheme openly in the cities, and after which he was allowed to go unpunished on grounds which could not satisfy Spain or any other country. On a subsequent occasion, the proper retribution overtook the buccaneer; though it was not in the United States, but in Cuba, that the conspirator suffered death on the scaffold, in 1851. The supremacy of the South at Washington was shown no less clearly by the passage of the Fugitive-slave Bill in 1850. That Bill was a clear test of the quality of the representatives of the Free States in both Houses of Congress; and, when those representatives permitted and assisted such a proposal to pass into a law, there could no longer be a doubt in the minds of political philosophers everywhere, that for America, too, there was a revolution in store. If there were true republicans among the whites, such a law could not work; and, if there were not, the negroes must, sooner or later, take their case into their own hands. When it became clear that the law would not work, and that certain States chose to maintain rights of personal liberty which were excluded by the Fugitive-slave Law, the only question was, when the inevitable revolution would take place. There was no promise of a roused national spirit in the election of Mr. Pierce for president, in 1852. One more term must pass

before a Free-Soil party could make an open fight, and yet another term before the indispensable reversal of the Southern policy could begin, and the great Republic recover the political reputation which it had so long been losing.

When wrong dominates at home, there are usually quarrels abroad; and this period exhibits more than one menacing dispute with Great Britain. The settlement of ^{Controversies.} the Oregon question, in 1846, has been recorded at page 489 of this history. It did not prove to be, as supposed, a final settlement; for the American claim to the island of San Juan has arisen since, and remains to be adjusted. In 1852, an avowedly temporary agreement was entered into about the fishing grounds off the British Colonies of North America; and, in 1854, the President announced to Congress the ratification of the treaty, by which mutual concessions were made, and the quarrel ended. Disputes arose on Central-American questions, between the two governments, and on matters relating to the north-west boundary. Graver strifes have arisen since, — not at all to the surprise of sensible and patriotic men in both nations, who have always understood the temper of slaveholders of all countries. When in authority, it is their policy, and probably their necessity, to raise excitements abroad, in order to get more easily through troubles at home. The faith of good men everywhere has been, that, when relieved of the curse of slavery, the United States would find their relations with other countries easier and happier than ever before.

At the opening of this period, Mr. Polk was president. He was succeeded by General Taylor, who died in office. ^{Presidents.} The vice-president, Mr. Fillmore, discharged the duties as president till the next term, when Mr. Pierce was elected. — One of the remarkable events of the period was the ^{Gold discoveries.} discovery of gold in California. The effects of the discovery of Californian and Australian gold have not been altogether what was anticipated in regard to the financial condition of all nations. It is still disputed, by qualified observers, whether any perceptible rise in general prices has even yet taken place; but other great changes have followed in the opening and peopling of the wilds, and the rapid creation of fully organized societies in the colonies of England and in remote territories of the United States.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHILE Englishmen were sailing away in one direction to land where they hoped to discover gold, other Britons — as gallant a set of mariners and scientific explorers as their country has ever produced — were sailing away in another direction, hoping to discover the one remaining track of water-way which would complete the North-west Passage. The “Erebus” and “Terror,” bearing Sir John Franklin and his comrades, sailed in 1846, never to return. At the close of the period, we were still in utter darkness in regard to their fate; and, when the truth was ascertained, there was no survivor to tell us their story. Franklin died, betimes, on board his own ship, and the rest of hunger. — Mr. Layard was digging out marbles at Nineveh, while his countrymen were elsewhere digging out gold; and he was doubtless the best pleased at success, even though the great Ballarat nugget turned up, which weighed upwards of 134 pounds, and was worth £6000. A better discovery than either occurred in 1846–7, — that of the use of ether first, and then chloroform, in inducing insensibility to pain.

There were some great public works in this period. The first stone of the Portland Breakwater was laid by the Prince-consort in 1849. — The Britannia Tubular Bridge was made to span the Menai Straits. It was opened in 1850; and, two years after, the Queen went to see it. She walked the whole length inside, while her husband walked overhead, on the outside. — The London Coal Exchange was opened by the Prince, attended by the two eldest children, in 1849, on the only occasion of the absence of the Queen from any appointment from illness; and now it was only chicken-pox, and it did not prevent her seeing the procession from her window. The most conspicuous civic event of the time was no doubt the Great Exhibition of 1851, — the work of the Prince-consort, and the greatest boon ever bestowed on the industry and arts of the whole world at one stroke. — Much was

Arctic Expedition of 1846.

Nineveh marbles.

Chloroform.

Public works.

Exhibition of 1851.

done for the welfare of the people at large in these seven years. The hours of labor were restricted and regulated for women and children; great advances were made in the care of the public health,—the case being symbolized by Lord Palmerston and the Scotch Church in 1853, when a deputation of Scotch clergy waited on the Minister to ask for the appointment of a Fast Day on occasion of apprehended cholera. Lord Palmerston considered fasting to be bad in a season of cholera, and rather recommended all known means of prevention, such as purifying, airing, warming, and feeding the people and their dwellings. The pious petitioners were much scandalized; but society generally agreed with the Minister. The repeal of the Window-duty worked well in the direction of the public health.

The divisions in the religious world continued, as they must, under the constitution of any Protestant Established Church. The offence caused by Lord Palmerston's Church dissensions. view of the right course in the presence of an epidemic was extreme, though partial; and not less was that which he occasioned by an incidental remark on the hopeful quality of infants when under wise management. This last view was a bold avowal in a period when the Church could be torn with passion on account of the Gorham Controversy, on the nature of the efficacy of baptism, which makes the year 1850 memorable to the religious world. Another cause of offence was the discovery, by means of the census of 1851, of the real proportion in which the country is divided between the Established Church and those outside of it. The shock of the disclosure was great; and the first thought of zealous churchmen seems to have been, that in 1861 the country should be polled by its religious denominations. The vigilant spirit of religious liberty, however, rendered this project impracticable; and there was nothing left but for the Church to take to heart the unwelcome disclosure. A higher sympathy was called forth, by the issue of a University commission. commission, in 1850, to inquire into the constitution and workings of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. There was no lack of opposition from the beginning, and of obstruction when the commission got to work; but it effected great good, both within and without the Universities. These results lie beyond the limits of this period; and it will be one of the pleasures of historians to come, to show what those results have been. The Lords did a good work, in 1853, in delivering Lords' decision on Church rates. their interpretation of the law in regard to Church rates, — a decision which secures the abolition, in due course, of an ecclesiastical tax which is intolerably offensive to nonconformists. The subject is still disputed; but the issue of

the controversy was certain from the day of the decision of the Lords on the Braintree case.

There were fearful accidents within these few years,—burnings of ships, colliery explosions, and great floods, year after year. There is now a new kind of colliery inspection by which we may in time arrive at gaining some greater knowledge and control of these terrible disasters. For the burning of ships there is, generally speaking, no excuse; and such accidents must therefore become too disgraceful for endurance, and will nearly cease. As for the floods, they have been a direct consequence of the increase of agricultural drainage; and when it is perceived that there is no preventive of burst reservoirs, and drowned lands, and the destruction of crops and stock, but a thorough rectification of the river system of the kingdom, that rectification will be provided for.

Four of our Queen's children were born within this period,—the princesses Helena and Louisa, and princes Arthur and Leopold. There were several royal deaths,—the most interesting of which, to the English nation, was that of the Queen Dowager,—good Queen Adelaide, who died at the close of 1849, at the age of fifty-four. Parliament had made her immensely rich, and she might have been happier with a smaller income; but in no hands could the £100,000 a year have done less harm. She spent it, as well as she knew how, on churches and charities; and neither rank nor wealth ever spoiled the homely simplicity of her heart and her manners, any more than they enlarged the scope of her mind. She was an admirable wife for an impromptu elderly king, infirm in mind; and she shed respectability over a reign which a less prudent and happy-tempered wife might have allowed to be ridiculous or worse.—Her two brothers-in-law, Queen Victoria's uncles, the King of Hanover and the Duke of Cambridge, died in the following year, 1850. The first was considered the most unpopular man in the two kingdoms to which he belonged. The exploits of the Orange Societies narrated in the preceding part of this history will easily explain the fact.¹ The Duke of Cambridge, the youngest and last surviving of the brothers (who, however, was 76), was good-naturedly regarded in Hanover, where he had for a time been viceroy for his brother, George IV., for his *bonhomie*, and in England for his patronage of almost every considerable charity which acted through public meetings and annual dinners. There was no material in him for a higher view than this.—The Ex-king Louis Philippe died in the same year, cer-

Casualties.

Royal births.

Royal deaths.

The Queen

Dowager.

The King of
Hanover, and
Duke of Cam-
bridge.

Ex-king of
the French.

¹ Ante, vol. iii. p. 562.

tainly less respected, and regarded as less interesting than before his eighteen years' probation as a ruler. He, too, was 76. — The greatest man of the time died in 1852; and the highest respect to a man so great as the Duke of Wellington is to record only his name in this place. The Queen and her family were ^{The Duke of Wellington.} at Balmoral (which we first hear of within this period), when, on the 16th of September, the tidings of the Duke's death reached them. The Queen was out on an excursion. She at once turned back, sent her Prime Minister to the Duke's family, countermanded all plans of pleasure, and put her household into mourning. Whatever could be done to honor the great soldier's memory was done by the magnificent funeral of the 18th of November; but, in the midst of it, not a few who were gazing on the car and the splendid coffin may have liked better to think of him on his ordinary bed, the little iron camp-bedstead, from which, to the last, he rose betimes to attend early service in the chapel at St. James's. From that nightly rest, the car was bearing him to his lasting rest, by Nelson's side, in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral. — Another great soldier departed the next year, — Sir Charles J. Napier. ^{Sir Charles J. Napier.} Paladins, the band of brothers, who have moved in our nineteenth century, like a revival of the martial and patriotic and poetical life of five centuries ago. Sir Charles Napier was the one man to whom the rescue of India, under recent dangers, was confided by the universal desire. When he doubted his physical capacity for such a task, the Duke of Wellington, then trembling toward the tomb, said, "If you do not go, I must." The younger man went; and, before he returned, he did his best to warn the authorities, military and civil, of a coming mutiny, desperate, and probably fatal to British rule, if immediate steps were not taken towards making the native troops what they once were. His advice was not taken, probably because the mistakes in policy and management had gone too far for the belief of some and the courage of others. He died in 1853, and four years afterwards his most alarming prophecies came true. His brother William, the historian of the Peninsular War, survived him, and vindicated his fame with passionate devotedness till events took the defence upon themselves.

The only statesman of any mark, except Sir R. Peel, who died about this time, was Lord George Bentinck. ^{Lord George Bentinck.} He dropped dead in a field, in the autumn of 1848. He was remarkable only for the desperate and hopeless stand he made against free-trade, when he, a mature man of sporting habits, devoted himself to the decrepit cause of Protection. He

achieved nothing but a sort of respect for such gallantry, mistaken as it was.

In 1848, the great engineer, George Stephenson, died, — the true type of the self-raised man. His works are of a kind to perpetuate his memory; and with it will for ever be associated the efforts by which he became capable of such services. — Another self-raised man was Ebenezer Elliott, the Sheffield craftsman and Anti-corn-law poet. His “rhymes,” as he called his really noble poems, spread through the country and roused the hearts of the working-classes, till (as happens with such men) the words became deeds, and wrought as such. He was stern, and even hard; but the times of his youth were hard, and the bad law under which his order suffered even hunger is answerable for a harshness which could not be at once cured when the law was rectified. He was a true and a great poet, and the fire burned within him up to the time of his death, at 68.

His name carries us over to the poets and other authors of his time. Within this period died Wordsworth, Moore, and Joanna Baillie, — all in old age, but not the less lamented by those who in youth had worshipped them. Moore took a lower place than either of the others, — not living by poetry as Wordsworth did, incessantly feeding his mind and heart by it; nor simply and contentedly enjoying it in modest privacy, as was Joanna Baillie’s way. Yet there were multitudes who loved the music of Moore’s lays, and had been and still were fired by the glow of his patriotic songs; and these were grieved when it became known that Thomas Moore was too far gone in faculties for society, and then that he was dead, at the age of 72. — In William Wordsworth we had a great gift in his lofty eloquence and in his vindication of all human sympathies; but it appears probable that a future generation will be most grateful to him for having brought us up out of a misleading conventionalism in poetry, to a recognition and contemplation of nature in subject and in expression. It was long before the critical world could be disabused; but the effort was met by popular sympathy, wherever it could be reached from the beginning; and the popular sympathy long ago rose above all the opposition of an out-

worn criticism. — It was before our generation that Joanna Baillie. Joanna Baillie wrote the plays which turned the heads of the reading world; but, up to her latest day, when she was 89, she was more honored than in her illustrious youth, if less worshipped. She died in 1851; and in four years more her contemporary and friend, Mr. Rogers, followed at the age of 92. It was his chief poem, “Pleasures of Memory,” which stimulated Campbell to write his “Pleasures of Hope.”

The quiet and gentle beauty of Mr. Rogers's poem made its way to the general heart; and its early fame has not been obscured by other good deeds of Mr. Rogers in the advancement of art, and in generous aid to intellectual aspirants of every class. — Maria Edgeworth lived to be 82, and died in 1849. She it was who early and effectually interested her century in the character and lot of the Irish; and she did much besides to raise the character of fiction, and to gratify the popular mind, before Scott and Bulwer and Dickens occupied that field of literature. It was as the friend of little children, however, that Miss Edgeworth is most beloved, and will be most gratefully remembered. Her delectable Rosamond is worth a score of famed novel heroes, and is surely destined to everlasting youth, with an ingenuousness that can never be sullied, and a vivacity that can never be chilled. — Among the minor writers of the period, a word of remembrance and of sorrow may be spoken on the fate of Eliot Warburton, who perished in the burning of the "Amazon" steamer, in 1852. His writings were of no high or durable importance, but he gave pleasure to many readers in his day. — Something more may be said of Basil Montague, though his pretensions exceeded his qualifications in the walk of philosophy. He was not a qualified expositor of Bacon; but he excelled in selection from old philosophers and divines. He should be remembered for his pertinacious and indomitable efforts to get the punishment of death abolished. He holds a prominent place among the good men who used their social influence successfully to stop the practice of putting men and women to death for other than the gravest offences. — A far greater essayist, the acknowledged prince of criticism, died in 1850, at the age of 77, — Francis Jeffrey, the editor of the "Edinburgh Review," which, though instituted long before the period of our history, must be regarded as one of the most powerful influences of the time. No one supposes the influence to have been altogether for good, or the principle of reviewing to be, on the whole, defensible, — as authors must generally be better informed on the subjects they write on than their self-constituted judges; nor can it be said that the spirit of the "Edinburgh Review" was in its early days as generous, or at any time as earnest, as could be wished: but, with all these drawbacks, it was of eminent service in opening a wide range of subjects to middle-class readers, and in advocating liberal political principles. Francis Jeffrey's articles were the gems of the publication: all clear, sensible, here and there deep and always elegant, they make us wonder why the fame of the essayists of a century earlier should have so far transcended that of the best of our Edinburgh reviewers.

In painting we lost Turner, in 1851, whose life was a plea for the study of nature instead of merely the old masters ;
T. W. M. Turner. and we have his works to show how ever new nature is, when contemplated by a mind which owes its training to art, but not its conceptions.

Placing ourselves at the point of view of March, 1854, we may speak of the other eminent persons as living ; though some, as Sir Charles Barry, Professor Wilson, Lord Macaulay, and Mr. Hallam, have since died.

Throughout this history, some grateful mention has been made of the benefactors that society has lost during our period of forty years. It is unnatural to conclude without some grateful mention of those who remained among us at the close of the period. Yet how little can be said while they yet live ! How presumptuous it seems to suppose that we can estimate their influence on society, or set forth what they have done ! It is only with regard to a very few that even a word can yet be ventured, — a few whose social influence was as unquestionable in 1846 as it can ever be to another generation. To a future generation must be left the duty and privilege of honoring a hundred more. We have, instead of the cathedral of old, a palace of national council, which is the truest and fittest direction for the spirit of

Barry. architecture to take in our age, and under our political constitution ; and Mr. Barry is our architect. In our splendid Houses of Parliament he has built his own monument ; and if, as one of the arts of peace, architecture has risen and improved during the period, Mr. Barry has been, by many other works scattered through our towns, the chief educator of the public taste. — In a widely different department of training, we have had a guide whose name should be remembered by the countrymen of Shakspeare. Macready. Mr. Macready has led the nation back again from some foolish wanderings to the real Shakspeare.

The Kembles presented the chief characters of Shakspeare with a glory which could not be surpassed ; but Mr. Macready has evidenced a faith in the popular mind for which the popular heart should be grateful. He has not only presented many characters in his own person with extreme intellectual power and skill, but he has brought these immortal plays before the public eye in their integrity, and trusted to the general mind to prefer them to meaner things.

One poet we have of such signal and peculiar power that his mind cannot but modify that of a future generation. The poems
Alfred Tennyson. of Alfred Tennyson have certainly much of the beauty of a long-past time ; but they have also a life so vivid, a truth so lucid, and a melody so inexhaustible, as to mark him the poet that cannot die.

John Wilson must unite the classes of poets and of essayists; for he is so entirely both, that it is impossible to separate him from either. Before he was known as ^{Willson.} Christopher North, he was known as a poet; and assuredly he is much more of a poet since he has written in prose. In our periodical literature he stands alone, giving us, in the form of essays and dialogues, drama, criticism, poetry, natural history, and infinite mirth, all blended together and harmonized by a spirit of inexhaustible kindliness which renders him truly a benefactor to an age that is held to need softening and cheering, even more than expanding. If any one questions whether Sir Roger de Coverley has been a blessing to men for above a century, such a one, but no other, may doubt whether Christopher North will be a blessing to men of another time.

Macaulay began his striking series of review articles when Jeffrey was retiring amidst the well-earned honors of ^{T. Macaulay.} his old age. Rapid, brilliant, crowded with powers and with beauties, Mr. Macaulay's "Essays" have roused and animated and gratified the minds of a multitude of readers, who would have required more than was reasonable if they had asked also for soundness of inference, completeness of statement, and repose of manner. Mr. Macaulay's influence as a historian is for a future generation to judge of; for his efforts in that direction have been entered upon since the close of our forty years. — Another eminent essayist is Walter Savage Landor; but his exquisite writings, full of thought, fresh ^{Landor.} and deep, and of feeling sound and heroic, with the charm of antique learning spread over all, are the luxury of the few, and not even likely to leaven the mind of the many through those few. Among the men of erudition who have made their generation the better for their learning, Mr. Hallam ^{Hallam.} is prominent. His review of the "Middle Ages" and his "History of Literature" are among the benefits of the time; but his greatest gift is his "Constitutional History," the value of which, with its singular impartiality and dispassionateness, may have been inestimable in a transitional political period. — One remains who must stand alone in our view, as he does in his life and his modes of thought, and in the character of his writings. Whatever place we assign him, and by whatever name ^{Carlyle.} we call him, Thomas Carlyle appears to be the man who has most essentially modified the mind of his time. Nothing like his mind was ever heard or dreamed of in our literature before; nothing like his mournful, grotesque, and bitterly earnest writing ever seen. Yet his writings, though widely, are not universally read; and he has long wrought where his works have never appeared, and his name been barely heard.

Wherever English books are read, Bulwer's novels are found, and men and women are disputing whether they are harmless or much to be feared. His mind is evidently of so impressive and so eclectic a character as to prevent its productions having a vital influence, and therefore it seems as if they need not be feared; while there is great value in his wonderful analyses and specimens of the mind of the time; the politic, the worldly, the sceptical, the artistical, the literary, the self-observant, the would-be philosophical, — nearly all, perhaps, but the simple, the religious, or the truly philosophical. Bulwer has given us popular dramas too; and successful political pamphlets, and volumes of poems, and essays. Succeeding more or less in every walk, his best achievement, as many good judges think, is in his early series of essays republished under the title of "The Student." However opinions may vary about the claims of particular works, there can be no doubt that Bulwer has largely occupied the mind and leisure of the public of his day. — Last

Dickens. and greatest among the novelists comes Charles Dickens, — the Boz who rose up in the midst of us like a jin with his magic glass among some Eastern people, showing forth what was doing in the regions of darkness, and in odd places where nobody ever thought of going to look. It is scarcely conceivable that any one should, in our age of the world, exert a stronger social influence than Mr. Dickens has in his power. His sympathies are on the side of the suffering and the frail; and this makes him the idol of those who suffer, from whatever cause. We may wish that he had a sounder social philosophy, and that he could suggest a loftier moral to sufferers; could lead them to see that "man does not live by bread alone," and that his best happiness lies in those parts of his nature which are only animated and exalted by suffering, if it does not proceed too far; could show us something of the necessity and blessedness of homely and incessant self-discipline, and dwell a little less fondly on the grosser indulgences and commoner beneficence which are pleasant enough in their own place, but which can never make a man and society so happy as he desires them to become. We may wish for these things, and we may shrink from the exhibition of human miseries as an artistical study; but, these great drawbacks once admitted, we shall be eager to acknowledge that we have in Charles Dickens a man of a genius which cannot but mark the time, and accelerate or retard its tendencies. In as far as its tendencies are to "consider the poor," and to strip off the disguises of cant, he is vastly accelerating them. As to whether his delineations are true to broad-daylight English life, that may be for some time to come a matter of opinion on which men will differ. That they are, one and all, true to the ideal in the

author's mind, is a matter on which none differ; while the inexhaustible humor, the unbounded power of observation, the exquisite occasional pathos, and the geniality of spirit throughout, carry all readers far away from critical thoughts, and give to the author the whole range of influence, from the palace library to the penny book-club.

It is something new in England to see a satirical periodical, — a farcical exposure of the sins and follies of the time.

We have one now. Some of the wits of London, Punch. with Douglas Jerrold at their head, set up a weekly commentary on the doings of London as seen by "Punch;" and there is no corner of the kingdom to which "Punch's" criticisms have not penetrated. The work has been very useful, as well as abundantly amusing: it has had its faults and follies, and has dropped some of them; and now its objects of satire are usually as legitimate as its satire is pungent and well-tempered. It is something that the grave English have a droll periodical to make them laugh every week; and it is something more that the laugh is not at the expense of wisdom.

In the solemn and immortal labors of the laboratory and the observatory we have Faraday and Herschel yet busy.

It is not for us to speak of the secrets of nature which Herschel. they are laying open; and it is not for any one to compute what they have done, or to anticipate what they may do. Of one work of Sir J. Herschel's we may form some estimate, — his "Preliminary Discourse on Natural Philosophy." That treatise is enough to make any man with a mind and heart long to devote himself to the pursuit of physical science, as the high road to wisdom, from that moment onwards. His own devotion to it is an example and inducement to all who can follow. He went to the Cape to set up his observatory, leaving behind all considerations but that of the advancement of science; and every step of his pilgrimage has set its mark on a future age. —

As for Faraday, we dare say only that he is pene- Faraday. trating into mysteries of existence of which his own vast faculties can hardly bear the contemplation, and which will therefore become fully comprehensible only to a future generation. Under his gaze and his touch, the solid material of the universe is all melting away; matter — according to the old and now vulgar idea of it — is dissolving itself into forces; and our feeble insight into nature would be blinded, and our weak grasp of reliance would be all cast loose, but for the great truth which presents itself more clearly through all changes, — that immutable law rules everywhere, all-sufficing for our intellectual support and our ease of heart. If we cannot compute what has been done by the researches and discoveries of Faraday for the period

through which we have passed, we can say nothing of how they will influence the next. We can only feel certain, that, in as far as they must change the aspect of the universe, and give a new command over the conditions of organized life, they must largely affect the destiny of man, both in his intellectual progress and his social relations. It will be for the men of that future time to assign to Faraday his place in the history of his country and of his kind.

In taking a review of any period within our own experience, every one of us is apt to exaggerate the gains of the time, — its gains in knowledge, arts, and moral views. This arises in part from our confounding change or expansion in our own ideas with change in the world about us. Therefore we are liable to be struck by an opposite view upon occasion; and, in contemplating the best things in the old world, — not its arts and science, but the wisdom of its sages, and the mental condition and communion of its people, — to doubt whether, after all, the human race has got on so very much as is commonly said. If we endeavor to keep our view extended, we shall not suppose that any critical or decisive advance can have been made by any section of the human race in a period of forty years; and we shall look without pride or vanity, it may be hoped, upon such improvements as may be recognized; while the review of such improvements may be thoroughly delightful, as convincing us of that rapid partial advance towards the grand, slow, general advance which we humbly but firmly trust to be the destination of the human race.

To look first to the lowest class of improvements, — the arts of life, — we find many of recent origin, which promote the general convenience and comfort. The electric telegraph is a marvel of the time which our minds are even yet hardly able to familiarize themselves with; and yet, while amazed at what we see, we have a clear persuasion that this is but the opening of a series of discoveries and inventions. News is transmitted as by a lightning flash; messages are exchanged, police and soldiery may be summoned on an emergency, criminals are captured, scientific observations at distant points may become all but simultaneous, and there is a strengthening expectation that distant countries may communicate, not by the sea, slowly and hazardously, as hitherto, but through the sea, with the rapidity of thought. And still, when we look at the natural facts that have manifested themselves in the course of recent experiments, we are aware that much more remains to be revealed. — Then, again, we have discovered the wonderful fact of sun-painting. Not only are our portraits taken (with a harshness at present which will soon, no doubt, be

softened down by art), — portraits about whose likeness there can be no dispute, — but a world of toil and error is certain to be saved in coast-surveying, architectural portraiture, and delineation in natural history. Every fibre of a flower, every stone of a building, every feature of any scene, is fixed in a moment in its true proportions, to last for ever. There need no more be controversy in future centuries about the aspects of perished cities, or speculation about the faces of the illustrious dead. Each age may leave to the future a picture-gallery of its whole outer life. — Then, again, there is a telescope existing Lord Rosse's telescope. of such power, that every rock in our side of the moon, as large as a church, is visible. We do not hear much of this marvel yet, because it is not yet so manageable as it will be; and errors derived from its use are as enormous as its powers. But it is a vast new opening into science, through which wise men are learning to look, and which may hereafter stand wide to the peasant and the child. — Of steam and railways enough has been said. Everybody knows more than could be told here of what they do in superseding toil, in setting human hands free for skilled labor, in bringing men face to face with each other, and with nature and novelty; the peer face to face with the farmer and the merchant, and the mechanic face to face with mountain and forest and sea. — Then, again, we have new explosive substances which first connect themselves in our Gun-cotton. thoughts with war, — as the gun-cotton of recent invention, but which will doubtless be used to lay open secrets of human nature, and help us in our application of the arts when the nations shall not learn war any more. In an humbler way, but by no means a contemptible one, we have now means of obtaining fire in a moment, everywhere. Not only in the cottage, but in every house, the tiresome tinder-box, with its slowness and uncertainty, was the only way to get fire twenty years ago, except in the chemist's laboratory, where phosphorus matches were a sort of terror to the commonalty. Now the penny box of lucifers is in every cottage, where it saves the burning of the rushlight for the baby's sake. We have had some rick and shed-burning in consequence; but that evil was sure to follow any great facility in obtaining fire. — In water-proof clothing, the poor have obtained a great benefit. Large classes of laborers may soon be better protected from wet at their out-door work than are the policemen of the present day. — The Thames Tunnel may at first The Thames tunnel. appear purely a work of human head and hands, — a piece of boring and building; but it could not have been achieved in an age of science inferior to our own. Mention has been made before of the strong and wide interest which existed about this work when it was brought to a stop, and shut up for

some years. The sanguine were justified in their prophecies that it would be opened again.¹ In December, 1841, the works reached the shaft at Wapping; and, on the 24th, an opening was made in the brick-work of the shaft, and a large party of gentlemen — all the directors and several original subscribers — walked through, being the first persons who had ever passed under the river from shore to shore. In March, 1843, it was opened to foot-passengers; a grand procession with music passing through one side, and returning by the other.² While this modern mermaid music was going on lower than the fishes could dive, there was some grief and mourning above,—such as always makes the drawback on new appliances of civilization. A black flag was hung out at the tunnel pier, to show the displeasure of the watermen at such a supersession of their Redriffe ferry. In the next July, the Queen and Prince Albert went to see the tunnel; and, in the following March, at the end of the first year, upwards of 2,000,000 of foot-passengers had paid toll. To this day, it is the first object of curiosity to foreigners visiting London.

It must be in another kind of history than this that the progress of science during the last forty years should be recorded. Here we can only point out the great apparatus provided for that end in the British Association for the Advancement of Science. This association has continued to hold its meetings from year to year; and, admitting all that has been said, and all that can be said, of its drawbacks,—of the waste of time by the talking of egotists, and the levity and vanity of many who congregate there for excitement or display,—there remains a large amount of practical service to human interests. There are men watching the tides on the shores of all seas; and we are likely to know in time the levels of all the waters of the globe. Observatories — Russian, French, American, British, and others — are set up in every zone. One man comes with proof in his hand of the existence of an unseen heavenly body, which others begin to look for; and something, whether it or another, is found. Others come from Geology, searching in the opposite direction, and bring up almost incredible knowledge from the bowels of the earth. The most obvious result, perhaps, to common eyes, of these scientific gatherings, is the wide spread of geological knowledge; or, at least, of ideas relating to such knowledge. It is a good thing that men should have some notion of the structure of the globe; it is better that their minds should open to the conception of vast spaces of time, and of huge revolutions of nature, and of that order of appearance of all living things which is so unlike pre-

British Scientific Association.

Geology.

¹ Annual Register, 1841, Chron. 123. ² Annual Register, 1843, Chron. 30.

vious conception; but it must surely be a nobler thing still that men should learn the relation they bear to their place of abode, — should get to know how the human mind and life take their character from the geological formation of the region they dwell in. If they perceive how the dwellers in the desert must necessarily be one sort of men, and the dwellers in pasturelands another, — how thoughts and desires and ways, and therefore physical structure itself, are modified by men living in a mineral, or a pastoral, or an agricultural district, — they have obtained a grasp of some of the grandest conditions of human life, from which must arise, in time, some determining power over the human lot. It is not to be wondered at, considering how the science of geology interests at once the reasoning and the observing faculties, the imagination, — both antiquarian and speculative, — and the humanity which dwells more or less in every one, that its spread among the people should be one of the most noticeable facts of our time.

Then, there is some advance made towards a real science of medicine. It cannot be said that we have yet any science of medicine, properly so called; and the ablest Medicines. physicians are the most ready and anxious to make the declaration. But there are, or seem to be, now clear openings to a knowledge of the nature of disease, and not only to that of symptoms of disease. As a philosopher of our day is wont to say, we are now presented, as it were, with the fragmentary parts of some great general law of the human frame, which we seem to be on the verge of discovering. Since the peace, the physicians of Europe have communicated more freely than before; though still the spirit of the profession hinders their communicating enough, or in the best manner. The hitherto universal empirical method of producing, by drugs and otherwise, one set of symptoms of disease to drive out another, has already given way, in many directions, to the trial of more natural methods, based on new observations. Dr. Hahnemann's opposite method, based on a theory yet dim and imperfect, but more philosophical on the face of it, prevails widely in schools of medicine abroad, and in private practice in England, so as to have remarkably diminished the application of drugs, and the creation of artificial ailments. The water-system, with all its abuse and extravagance, has been useful in putting a check upon the worse empiricism which preceded it; and we have considerably advanced in our insight into some prodigious mysteries of the human frame, which rebuke alike the levity of ignorance and the solemnity of professional dogmatism. Our knowledge is as yet little enough, but it is more than it was; and one consequence of the research, and of improved intercourse with the continent, — a consequence open to

universal observation, — is, that physicians give fewer and fewer drugs, and admit more and more freely that a scientific basis for their profession remains to be found. — As might be expected, the knowledge of anatomy and physiology, and the art of surgery, have advanced at a far more rapid rate; and, in this way, the chances of alleviation of human suffering are improving every day.

And here we slide into the department of social interests. Sanitary improvement. The attention given to sanitary improvement is a leading feature of our time. Thirty years ago, scarcely anybody thought of pure air, good drainage, a sufficient supply of water, or even cleanliness of person, as we all think of them now. In the greatest houses, there was little or no thought about what kind of soil the house was built on, or where the drains emptied themselves, or where the used-up air of the apartments went to, or perhaps of the necessity of thorough daily ablution; yet now these things are coming into consideration on behalf of the very poorest. There was, forty years ago, more spirit-and-water drinking among the middle classes, more tight-lacing among women, more physicking of children, more close rooms, a more imperfect washing of clothes, less exercise and cold water in general use, less horror at close alleys, and large cities without airing-grounds. Now we have people's parks here and there; we have baths and wash-houses for the poor, — and not as charity, but as a purchasable convenience for those who live in small houses or few rooms. We have not yet achieved the wholesome and profitable drainage of towns, and ventilation of the houses therein, and the abolition of burial of the dead among the homes of the living; but we have a firm hold of the idea and the purpose, and the great work is therefore sure to be done. Dr. Andrew Combe. Among many benefactors in this direction, we must mention, first, Dr. Andrew Combe, the kindly Edinburgh physician, who turned his own loss of health to the purpose of improving the health of others. He made himself a subject of cool philosophical observation, and gave us the benefit, in some popular works on physiological subjects, which have diffused a useful knowledge of the conditions of health, and a wholesome observance of them, wherever they have spread, — that is, almost all over Great Britain and the United States, and probably much further. In these works, whose views are to a great degree the reflection of the sufferings of the author, there is no trace of egotism, or of any thing else that is morbid. Dr. Combe unconsciously gives us in them a moral instruction not less valuable than the sanitary. — Mr. Chadwick. Mr. Chadwick has no doubt done more than any one other man in direct furtherance of the general health. He has looked at the subject

on every side, and exhibited it in every light. He has insisted, not only on the cruelty of condemning a multitude of our citizens to disease and premature death, but on the sin of encouraging crime by discomfort, and the folly of expending more money on the burial of the dead, and the support of the widows and orphans that they leave, than would keep the community in health. Mr. Chadwick's connection with the first commission of the new poor-law afforded him opportunity for obtaining an extraordinary amount of information on sanitary subjects; and he has so strenuously worked the enterprise of reform, that its completion is, amidst many discouragements and difficulties natural in such a case, merely a question of time. Before the history of another period shall be written by some one of the next generation, we may hope that the Thames will have ceased to receive the filth of London and of other towns; that the sewers will answer their proper purpose; that every house will be supplied with pure water; that the dead will be buried in country cemeteries; that every stagnant ditch and dunghill will be treated as a public offence; and that the causes of fever will be destroyed wherever it is possible to detect them.

The pursuit of this inquiry has cut out work for the agricultural associations of the kingdom. It is now known that the proper application of the filth that destroys ^{Agricultural associations.} life by fever, would support, in the form of wholesome food, a vastly increased amount of human life. The science of agricultural chemistry has advanced materially within thirty years, — partly in consequence of our improved intercourse with the continent. And our agricultural associations have sprung up within a much shorter date. The Board of Agriculture, the pet project of George III., was supported by an annual parliamentary grant. It had no real life in it, and it expired when the parliamentary grant was withdrawn in 1817. After that, we had in England nothing corresponding to the great and useful Highland Society of Scotland. Scotch farming improved continually. In England, farming could hardly grow worse than it had been; but it did not improve. Mr. William Shaw understood something of the magnitude of the need. In 1834, and subsequent years, he urged continually, in agricultural periodicals, the formation of a national society for the advancement of practical agriculture. At the dinner of the Smithfield Club, on the 11th of December, 1837, Lord Spencer proposed the formation of such a society; and the thing was done. From the knowledge since obtained, and the results already exhibited, it appears, that, if we understood our position and our business, there need be no more fear of an insufficiency of work or of food for the people. If all refuse were used as manure, and all the land now under cultivation

were properly tilled, we should hear no more in our time of surplus population, of wages falling below 8s., of farmers having cause to dread the importation of foreign wheat, or of the consumption of meat being confined to classes who by no means want it most. As the development of manufactures was the grand economical feature of the last century, that of agriculture appears likely to become the distinctive feature of the present. The pernicious spell of protection is dissolved ; something like a scientific education is now to be obtained by the next generation

we can do more for the extinction of the hellish traffic than by any armed force that can be sent out upon the sea. As the nation first in economic rank among the peoples of the world, it seems as if it must be our business to put down slavery by exhibiting its inferiority to free labor, while not the less insisting on its moral odiousness.

We have witnessed the rise and progress of mechanics' institutes. We have seen a small beginning made of a state education of children. A very small beginning Education. it is, — the whole sum of parliamentary grants not yet reaching half a million. There has been a great amount of virtuous voluntary effort among Churchmen, Dissenters, Chartists, employers of labor, and a multitude who were ready to aid: but there are bounds to the ability of individuals; and it cannot, in the nature of things, go on expanding in proportion to the ever-growing need. Again, the quality of the education given by private efforts is a very uncertain matter. It can rarely be so good as that which is planned from the united wisdom of a people, and it is apt to be of a very low order. The sectarian spirit, which is the curse of English society, has thus far condemned the children of the nation to a defective education, or to total ignorance. While in no department of benevolent action has there been more energy and good-will than in extending education, in none are we more behind the needs of the time. We shall not be safe, morally, politically, or economically, till we join in agreeing, that, as each Church cannot have its own way, nor any one, even though it be the Established Church, we must meet the evil of ignorance in the largest class of the people, by throwing open to all means of sound moral and intellectual education, leaving the religious instruction and training to the pastors or guardians of the pupils. In indirect ways, meanwhile, the education of the people has been going on. We have seen that much was done for the intellects of large numbers by the action of the Anti-Corn-Law League. Much, again, has been done by the vast spread of cheap literature, inducing, among other benefits, the formation of penny-a-week book clubs. — And then there is that animating feature of the time, Popular music. the introduction of music as a popular pursuit. For this, we are obviously indebted to the peace. It is from Germany that this remarkable benefit has come. In 1842, we find the first performance of Mr. Hullah's musical classes to have taken place, in the presence of Prince Albert, in Exeter Hall.¹ The classes were formed under the sanction of the government council of education. Here, on the very first public trial, 1500 novices sang, without the guidance of any instrument, psalms,

¹ Annual Register, 1842, Chron. 71.

hymns, and a madrigal, in a manner which made some hearers look upon Mr. Hullah as a sort of magician, who could convert a crowd of untuned English adults, hitherto almost unconscious what music was, into a vast organ endowed with soul. Since that date, music has been a beloved and joyful pursuit in many a little back-parlor in Whitechapel and the suburbs of London, in many a workshop in provincial towns, and at evening gatherings in remote villages where some pupil of Hullah or Mainzer may have settled. There is now glee-singing to be heard among apprentices in north-country villages which could hardly have been surpassed, a quarter of a century ago, in our cathedral towns. — In another branch of art, how has

Popular art.

the popular taste been improved by the immigration of foreigners! Before 1815, our artisan classes saw an exhibition of wax-work occasionally, and could buy for their mantel-shelf blue and green plaster parrots, and brown and white plaster cats. Now, we find in cottages the Princess Marie's Joan of Arc, and Canova's groups, or our own Shakspeare and Milton, — cheap and somewhat coarse, but better than parrots and cats. It is surprising now to go into remote corners of the country, where Italian boys have not penetrated, and see there what ornaments our people admired before the peace. This is a benefit not confined to large towns. In large towns we find something more. We find museums and galleries of art, and exhibitions of manufactures opened to the multitude. The British Museum admits, on Easter Monday, more than the total population of a provincial city; and there are hundreds of artisans in London who can now tell their brother-workmen about the gods and heroes of Egyptian temples and tombs, and the monuments of Assyrian monarchs mentioned in the Bible.

Amidst these processes of virtual education, we find the function of the educator somewhat more respected than it used to be. There are still suburban villages where the inhabitants are too genteel to admit persons engaged in education to their book-clubs; but this is laughed at by the wiser majority of the middle class. Some of the efforts to exalt the position of the educator have been fantastic enough, and unsuccessful accordingly; for it is a thing which cannot be arbitrarily done. When education is duly improved, the educator will be duly honored, and not till then; and for the sound reason that not till then will the educator be worthy of his pretensions. Meantime, the tutor and the governess are more humanely considered than they used to be, in regard to their sufferings and their needs, and more sure of appreciation when they merit it. The main evil still is in the middle-class poverty, which makes tutors and governesses of many hundreds who would fain obtain their

bread in some other way, and who are thus not in a position to require more than a mere rescue from present poverty. Associations for the relief and care of governesses are benevolent in aim, and afford subsistence and solace to the worn-out and helpless to a certain extent; but it is obvious that this is not an agency which can elevate a class, or modify an institution. If governesses are to rise to honor and independence, it must be by their being educated to sustain an honorable and indispensable function. They must have professional requisites to obtain professional dues. Hitherto, their position has been partly one of service, partly a professional one, without express training for either.

There can be no question of our methods of charity having improved since the publication of the reports on which ^{Methods of} the reform of the poor-law was founded. There was ^{charity.} always plenty of alms-giving; proneness enough to relieve the misery which met the eye. Now, there is more searching into the causes of misery, and a more widely spread knowledge that social misery cannot be cured, but is usually aggravated, by alms-giving.—The remaining grand feature of a re-^{Duelling.}newed social temper is the spread of a spirit of peace, — of a disinclination, that is, for brute violence. The diminution of the practice of duelling is remarkable. In 1843, after the public had been shocked by the occurrence of a fatal duel which in former times would have merely furnished forth the gossip of the day, an association was formed which would not in old times have been dreamed of,—an Anti-duelling Association, consisting of 326 members, so many of whom were of the two services, or noblemen, baronets, and members of Parliament, that they fairly conceived themselves strong enough in their union to lead public opinion in the matter of personal honor.¹ Their first act was to denounce duelling as contrary to the laws of God and man, and eminently irrational as well as sinful; and to pledge themselves to discountenance by influence and example the practice which they condemned. In the next year, some amended articles relating to duelling were issued from the war-office, by order of the Queen: and in these articles duelling was prohibited, on the representation that honorable men are ready to apologize for offence given in mistake or haste; and that a reference to friends, or, if that will not do, to the commanding-officer on the spot, ought to suffice for all purposes of personal justification. There were exhortations and provisions in regard to the seconds, and an assertion of true principles of honor in words of the Duke of Wellington, of old date. It was not to be supposed that a practice so grounded in self-regards as that of

¹ Annual Register, 1842, Chron. 61.

duelling could be put an end to by an ordinance like this: but it was a useful declaration at a particular juncture; and there can be no doubt of the great abatement of the barbarous practice during the last years of this period.

Finally, if we review for a moment the political morality of the period, we shall see, not only an improvement, but an essential change. The old Toryism is gone. We never hear of it now, even from the most antique members of the House of Peers. Our present Conservatism may admit under its term much that is selfish, corrupt, and requiring strenuous opposition: but its idea is indispensable under a representative system, and its requisitions are not at present offensive; or, it may be, they are not strongly enough urged to be injurious to the public welfare. The doctrines of Bentham, so much discussed in the early part of the century, and now so seldom heard of, were operative to the extent in which they were wanted. In as far as they were shallow, pedantic, and inadequate to the mind of man and the needs of a State, they are forgotten: in as far as they are rational and benevolent and genial, they still work. "The greatest happiness of the greatest number" is not now talked of as the profession of a school; but the idea is in the mind of politicians, and shapes their aims. The truest welfare of the largest classes has been the plea for much of our legislation, and especially for the whole grand achievement of the completion of free-trade. No statesman would now dream of conducting the government on any other avowed principle than consulting the welfare of the greatest number in preference

to that of any smaller class. — Another remarkable advance, which needs only to be indicated, is that in the direction of religious liberty. The emancipation of the Catholics might still be regarded as an act of mere pressing necessity; but the preponderance of opinion in favor of religious liberty — a preponderance in every political party, and in a case where there was nothing but the principle at stake; on the occasion, that is, of the Dissenters' Chapels Bill — showed a prodigious advance since the time when the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts was refused, with levity, or with silly solemnity, from session to session. The spirit of religious liberty may now be considered to dwell in every man among us worthy to be called a statesman.

While all this is done, — so much progress achieved that appears to be incontrovertible, — what remains to be done? Something greater than all that has been achieved. The tremendous labor question remains absolutely untouched, — the question whether the toil of a life is not to provide a sufficiency of bread. No thoughtful

What remains.

The labor question.

man can for a moment suppose that this question can be put aside. No man with a head and a heart can suppose that any considerable class of a nation will submit for ever to toil incessantly for bare necessities,—without comfort, ease, or luxury, now,—without prospect for their children, and without a hope for their own old age. A social idea or system which compels such a state of things as this, must be, in so far, worn out. In ours, it is clear that some renovation is wanted, and must be found. We see celibacy so extending in our middle class as that hardly half of them marry before they are elderly; while the poor and pauper class marry as before, and thus provide for a vast preponderance of the democratic element in our society in the course of another generation. And this is a serious matter for the statesman to ponder. It arises from a diminution of means in the middle class, and the recklessness of poverty in the very lowest. Such is its origin; but what will be its issue? While the statesman is pondering this, the moralist will mourn over the vice which is the inevitable consequence of the restriction of marriage in the middle class. And what can the moralist say to the extraordinary increase of the crime of domestic poisoning among our poor? That a mother should, unconscious of wrong, have poisoned eight infants in succession by putting arsenic on her breasts, is a fact which, strengthened by the occurrence of similar deeds about the same time, makes us fancy we are dreaming about living in an age of improved civilization and humanity. If it be true, as some of us say, that the laborer's life-long toil demands a return, not only of sufficient food, and a domestic shelter for his old age, but of intellectual and spiritual culture, what can we say to the intellectual and spiritual state of the lower portion of our working-classes? How much is there of the intellectual pride of ignorance and misinformation, and of that worst infidelity which grows out of a sense of injustice! If we hear complaints of the irreligion of the poor, and of the growth of that irreligion, we ought to put ourselves in their place, and observe how the religion of the rich must appear to them there; and then we shall understand how suspicious they must be of promises of unseen and future good, when it is offered as better than the substantial good which they see others enjoying, and feel to be their due. When a man sees his children sinking in body for want of food, and in mind for want of instruction, can he be content with the prospect held out by the well-fed and learned of a happiness which he cannot now understand, and is not sure that he could ever enjoy? Men so placed are like children. They must have justice before they can humbly and magnanimously forego justice. Before they can enter into a state of religious contentment, they must see why

they should be content ; and they ought to decline being content before they see reason for it. Thus it is, that, in spite of church-building, and missionary effort, and extensive charity, there is so much proud and hard irreligion among the poor of our nation. If it be said that they are improvident, and that a multitude who are in poverty need not be so, the answer again is plain. They know no better ; and that they know no better is caused by social neglect. They are not comfortable : they feel, that, while they work, they ought to be comfortable ; and they will not acquiesce while they see that those who work less are more comfortable, and they are not told why. This is what remains for us to do, — to find out the why, and to make everybody understand it.

The material for working out a better state is before us ; and the question of the rights of labor is pressing upon us. We have science brightening around us, which may teach us to increase indefinitely our supply of food. We have laborers everywhere who are as capable as any men above them of domestic solicitude, and who will not be more reckless about a provision for their families than gentlemen are, when once the natural affections of the citizen-parent are allowed free scope. We have now, by the recent repeal of the remnant of the navigation-laws, complete liberty of commerce. We have now the best heads and hearts occupied about this great question of the rights of labor, with impressive warnings, presented to us from abroad, that it cannot be neglected under a lighter penalty than ruin to all. Is it possible that the solution should not be found ? This solution may probably be the central fact of the next period of British history ; and then, better than now, it may be seen that in preparation for it lies the chief interest of the preceding Forty Years' Peace.

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